**Being and Nothingness** by Jean-Paul Sartre

**Introduction**

**The Pursuit of Being**

I. THE PHENOMENON

Sartre begins by discussing a number of dualisms which phenomenology eliminated by replacing the old notion of consciousness creating ‘representations’ of externally existing things in the mind, with that of the existent (existing object) as a phenomenon which appears to consciousness and truly reveals itself via a series of appearances (*abschattung*). The dualisms Sartre references are:

1. Interior and exterior – Regarding the existent, there is no longer an exterior we can have access to and an interior that is hidden from us; “The appearances which manifest the existent are neither interior nor exterior; they are all equal” (p.3)
2. Being and appearance – Appearance is now just the total series of appearances of the phenomenon and doesn’t refer to “a hidden reality” (p.4) which constitutes the *being* of the object. Appearance is no longer opposed to being, as say a distorted version of it, rather appearance is the measure of being.
3. Potency and act – Sartre rejects the claim that potency has any kind of concrete reality behind the act. The act is all there is.
4. Appearance and essence – Similar to what we have seen with being and appearance; “appearance does not hide the essence, it reveals it; it *is* the essence.” (p.5) The essence, rather than an imagined core of an existent, is the “principle [or ‘meaning’] of the series [of appearances]” (p.5).

Sartre claims that these dualisms have been collapsed into one remaining dualism we can’t avoid; that of finite and infinite. Despite the fact that each aspect (*abschattung*) is finite, because they reveal themselves to a perceiving subject there are necessarily an infinite number of them.

This new dualism directly replaces being (as the infinite) and appearance (as the finite). It also eclipses interior and exterior because the object is completely *in* each aspect but it is also completely *outside* each aspect since the series, being infinite, can never appear. Likewise, potency appears in the transcendence (the way it surpasses itself to infinity) of the phenomenon and the essence is manifested as the principle of the infinite series of appearances.

In addition, the “theory of the phenomenon has replaced the *reality* of the thing by the *objectivity* of the phenomenon… [where ‘objectivity’ doesn’t mean existing independently of me but that] it *is* there and that it *is not me*[,]… that the series of its appearances is bound by a principle which does not depend on my whim.” (p.5)

II. THE PHENOMENON OF BEING AND THE BEING OF THE PHENOMENON

Sartre next asserts that since we have concluded that everything is revealed to us via appearance there must also be a *phenomenon* (appearance) *of being* which discloses itself to us “by some kind of immediate access” (p.7) which it will be up to ontology to describe. This leads Sartre to wonder, “is the phenomenon of being thus achieved identical with the being of phenomena? In other words, is the being which discloses itself to me, which *appears* to me, of the same nature as the being of existents which appear to me?” (p.7)

We can always go from the particular object to the essence because its specific qualities (colour, taste, etc.) lead to its ‘essence’ which “is not *in* the object; it is the meaning of the object, the principle of the series of appearances which disclose it… But being is neither one of the object’s qualities… nor a meaning of the object.” (p.8) The problem is that the object is not related to being, it just *is*; the phenomenon “designates itself and not its being. Being is simply the condition of all revelation.” (p.8) If we try to carry our investigation from the individual phenomenon to being itself, as soon as we turn our attention away from the particular phenomenon we find ourselves concentrating “on the phenomenon of being, which is no longer the condition of all revelation, but which is itself something revealed – an appearance which, as such, needs in turn a being on the basis of which it can reveal itself.” (p.8) In trying to look directly at being we instead find ourselves looking at the *phenomenon* (appearance) of being, which is not being itself because this phenomenon of being *needs a separate being on which it can found itself*. In other words, this phenomenon, like all phenomena, can only appear courtesy of being which is what we are seeking but which, when we approach it in this way (i.e. through the phenomenon of being), ceases to be our focus.

However, this aborted attempt to discover being itself has answered the question Sartre raised at the beginning of this section. It has told us that “knowledge cannot by itself give an account of being [i.e. we cannot ‘know’ being through phenomenon]; that is, the being of the phenomenon cannot be reduced to the phenomenon of being.” (p.9) We have learnt that the phenomenon of being we apprehended is founded on a ‘deeper’ being; the ontological phenomenon of being “requires, as phenomenon, a foundation which is transphenomenal. The phenomenon of being requires the transphenomenality of being” (p.9) and the rest of the introduction amounts to a search for this.

III. THE PRE-REFLECTIVE *COGITO* AND THE BEING OF THE *PERCIPERE*

In this section, Sartre will start his investigation into the transphenomenality of being. He kicks off by rejecting the idea that “the being of the appearance is its appearing” (p.9) because he sees this as equivalent to Berkeley’s *esse est percipi* where the *noema[[1]](#footnote-1)* is treated as unreal and we find ourselves trapped in an idealist position. He rejects Berkley’s position for two reasons; one concerning the *percipi*, the other concerning the *percipere*. He will investigate the latter in this section.

First, what is the *percipere*? It is the infinitive “to perceive” and cashes out as a reflecting consciousness in Sartre’s philosophy. He goes on to note that we cannot reduce being to knowledge because the knowledge must in turn be supported by being. Ultimately, he finds that any *percipi* (“perceived”) would “refer to the *percipiens* [the act of perceiving] – the known to knowledge and knowledge to the being who knows (in his capacity as *being*, not as being known); that is, knowledge refers to consciousness.” (p.10) This marks consciousness as the “dimension of transphenomenal being in the subject.” (p.10)

Sartre reminds us that “consciousness is the knowing being in his capacity as *being* and not as being known.” (p.10) He wants to reinforce that we need to abandon knowledge if we want to understand consciousness. Consciousness is always *intentional*, that is to say, consciousness is always consciousness *of* something. This means that consciousness itself has no content. This overturns much philosophy that came before which held that objects were represented *in* consciousness. This is impossible because, as we have already seen, objects are infinite in their representations and as such could never be represented in consciousness. Another thing the purely content-free, intentional nature of consciousness means is that we can be confident in the phenomena which appear in consciousness because consciousness is directly connected to the world.

There is a “necessary and sufficient condition for a knowing consciousness to be knowledge *of* its objects, [and that] is that it be consciousness of itself as being that knowledge.” (p.11) This is necessary because “if my consciousness were not consciousness of being consciousness of the table, it would then be consciousness of that table without consciousness of being so. In other words, it would be a consciousness ignorant of itself, an unconscious – which is absurd.” (p.11)

Sartre again rejects the idea that this consciousness of consciousness has anything to do with knowledge. If it did we would be reintroducing the subject-object distinction into consciousness (since knowledge intrinsically depends on this dualism) and then we have the problem of needing to introduce a third term to make the subject known, and so on, leaving us with an infinite regression we can only stop with a non-self-conscious reflection (the unconscious consciousness again). The fact that consciousness is not dual, i.e. does not partake in knowledge, is why Sartre asserts that “there must be an immediate, non-cognitive relation of the self to itself… The immediate consciousness which I have of perceiving does not… *know* my perception, does not *posit* it.” (p.12)

As we have seen, this consciousness of consciousness (or “immediate consciousness”) necessarily, not just accompanies, but prefigures our normal reflecting consciousness; “every positional consciousness of an object is at the same time a non-positional consciousness of itself” (p.13). The example Sartre gives is of counting cigarettes. While counting, my attention can be completely devoted “outside” myself to the cigarettes themselves. In that case I have no *positional* knowledge (explicit knowledge directed towards an object) of myself counting, but I do have a *non-thetic[[2]](#footnote-2)* awareness of my activity. “If anyone… should ask, “What are you doing there?” I should reply at once, “I am counting.” (p.13) It is this *non-reflective* or *pre-reflective* consciousness that Sartre is talking about when he says consciousness of consciousness (self-consciousness) and which he holds to be not just primary to consciousness reflected-on, but the condition which renders reflection possible at all; “it must be present to itself, not as a thing but as an operative intention which can exist only as the revealing-revealed” (p.13)

What does this mean for Descartes’ *cogito,* which is a reflective apprehension? It means that the *cogito* he found, by reflecting on his own thinking, cannot be the primary *mode* of consciousness. Rather, there is something more fundamental. While Descartes was performing his *cogito*; that is to say, while he was thinking about his thinking, or *consciousness of something* (this *something* being the existent, specifically, his thinking), there was another type of consciousness present, the pre-reflective consciousness. How do we know this? Well, if someone had interrupted his musings and asked what he was doing, Descartes would have immediately replied, “I was thinking about my thinking”. He couldn’t have known this unless there was an *un-posited*, *non-thetic* awareness constantly running in the background. There is no infinite regression here because the pre-reflective consciousness is always un-posited. No matter what you posit as the existent, say, the time you were thinking about thinking about your consciousness, the pre-reflective consciousness is always one hidden (un-posited) iteration away, there but fundamentally non-positional.

Sartre then goes on to say that “it is the non-thetic consciousness of counting which is the very condition of my act of adding.” (p.13) In other words, without the pre-reflective consciousness, both reflection *and* action would be impossible. This seems like a bold claim but what he means is that without something ‘more’ than just consciousness of adding, the acts that make up that event could never obtain any unity or coherence. They would just be individual acts, meaningless and isolated.

It may now seem like we are trapped in a vicious circle; Sartre says we need a non-thetic self-consciousness (pre-reflective consciousness of consciousness) of counting to be able to count, but don’t we also need to count in order to be conscious of counting? “This is true. However there is no circle, or if you like, it is the very nature of consciousness to exist “in a circle.”” (p.13) Which comes first? The pre-reflective consciousness of the act or the act? Neither, or perhaps both. This is because of the unique nature of the pre-reflective consciousness, which is not a separate thing or a *new* consciousness. Rather, it is an *immediate* consciousness (of itself), which is to say, “one with the consciousness of which it is consciousness. At one stroke it determines itself as consciousness of perception and as perception.” (p.14) So, this self-consciousness which necessarily accompanies all consciousness of something is not a *new* ontological entity; rather, it is “*the only mode of existence which is possible for a consciousness of something*.” (p.14)

So, Sartre considers pleasure as a typical psychic event in light of what we have been talking about. Pleasure therefore must be consciousness of pleasure; “Pleasure cannot exist “before” consciousness of pleasure” (p.14). However, Sartre is quick to point out that we must not *define* pleasure as the consciousness of pleasure because this would force us back into idealism, and therefore back into the primacy of knowledge; something that raises us above ontological bedrock. Pleasure “is a concrete event, full and absolute. It is no more a quality of self-consciousness than self-consciousness is a quality of pleasure.” (p.15) But at the same time consciousness doesn’t exist first either; “There is no more first a consciousness which receives *subsequently* the affect “pleasure”… than there is first a pleasure… which receives subsequently the quality of “conscious”” (p.15). So, what is there? An “indivisible, indissoluble being… which is existence through and through” (p.15) and this thing is consciousness.

In addition, ““The ‘how’ (*essentia*) of this being, so far as it is possible to speak of it generally, must be conceived in terms of its existence (*existentia*).” This means that consciousness is not produced as a particular instance of an abstract possibility but that in rising to the center of being, it creates and supports its essence – that is, the synthetic order of its possibilities… Since consciousness is not *possible* before being, but since its being is the source and condition of all possibility, its existence implies its essence.” (p.15) There can be no “*laws* of consciousness” by which the whole can constitute the essence of a thing because a “law is a transcendent object of knowledge; there can be consciousness of a law, not a law of consciousness.” (p.15) This means that consciousness is pure activity and self-determination.

Since consciousness is “defined by the primacy of existence over essence, it cannot be conceived as a substance… it is pure “appearance”” (p.17). Sartre says this to point out the “ontological error” of Descartes in making mind a substance.

In conclusion, this section has revealed the transphenomenal *being* of the *knower* as consciousness and because consciousness *is* always consciousness *of* something (i.e. it is an insubstantial appearance), appearance and existence for it are identical, and this makes it the absolute.

IV. THE BEING OF THE *PERCIPI*

Sartre begins this section by reminding us that we have found in consciousness, “the ontological foundation of knowledge… the absolute in relation to which every phenomenon is relative.” (p.17) However, this isn’t the subject as Kant would describe it, this is “subjectivity itself” (p.17). We have also escaped idealism because idealism depends on knowledge which in turn depends on the law of duality, and we have seen that consciousness is non-dual. Instead, knowledge is founded on consciousness, the mode of being of which is immediate access; a mode “not a phenomenon of knowledge but… the structure of being.” (p.18)

However, while consciousness is the transphenomenal being of the perceiver, it can’t account for the full phenomenon of being (the appearance of being we apprehend) by itself. We need another transphenomenal being and with this in mind we now turn to the other half of the equation, i.e. the *percipi* (or the perceived).

Sartre’s first task here is to show that “the being of the *percipi* cannot be reduced to that of the *percipiens* – i.e., to consciousness” (p.18). We have already seen that doing so would leave us stranded in an idealism we cannot get out of again. What we can say, however, is that the *percipi* is *relative* to consciousness and its mode of being is *passive*. Neither of these can remain in his philosophy if Sartre is to show that the being of the perceived is not reducible to that of perception.

Regarding its relative existence, he points out that just because the *percipi* itself is relative to perception doesn’t mean that the *being* of the *percipi* is also relative to consciousness. Regarding passivity, he claims that passivity is actually the result of activity; “If I am to be for always “the-one-who-has-been-offended,” I must persevere in my being; that is, I myself assume my existence [actively]” (p.19) Sartre is essentially denying that passivity can be a part of the being of an existent. Even if this being undergoes modifications of which it is not the source or origin (a definition of passive), its being must still actively support itself in this mode of being (passivity). In addition, Sartre inverts the principle of action and reaction to demonstrate how passivity does not make the *percipi* dependent on the *percipiens*, rather both are passive; the “passivity of the recipient demands an equal passivity on the part of the agent” (p.20). Joseph Catalano (1974), in his commentary on *Being and Nothingness*, makes the point well through an analogy with isometric exercise. The only reason the right hand (the active subject) is able to push on the left (the passive object) is because it is also allowing the left hand to push back on it. “Analogously, red can *be* perceived only if perception is that-which-can-be-affected by the perceived-red.” (Catalano, 1974, p.37)

Sartre offers yet another argument that the being of the thing perceived does not depend on the being of perception; this time through creation. Creation, for Sartre, only makes sense “on condition that the created being recover itself, tear itself away from the creator in order to close in on itself immediately and assume its being… if the created being is to be supported [by the creator]… then the creature is in no way distinguished from its creator; it is absorbed in him” (p.19). This clearly can’t be the case with the being of the *percipi* because it transcends our perception of it with an infinite number of aspects.

Sartre next dedicates half a page to rejecting Husserl’s postulation of the *hyle* which was supposed to provide a connection between the *percipiens* and the *percipi*. Briefly, Husserl thought there were certain ‘laws’ or ‘principles’ in the object which organised its various aspects (*adumbrations*) into a synthetic whole. These principles provide the “hyle” (‘matter’ in Greek) to perception. Sartre critically looks for the being of the *hyle*, concluding that it can’t come from consciousness (because it would “disappear in translucency” (p.20) and therefore fail to grasp the object) nor can it come from the *percipi* (because it is not perceived by consciousness at all). In the end, he lambasts the whole notion as “a hybrid being which consciousness rejects and which cannot be a part of the world.” (p.20)

Sartre concludes this section by saying that “the perceived being is before consciousness; consciousness cannot reach it... [and that] the two determinations of *relativity* and of *passivity*, which can concern modes of being, can on no account apply to being” (p.21). And that is what Sartre had intended to show; “The transphenomenal being of consciousness cannot provide a basis for the transphenomenal being of the phenomenon.” (p.21)

V. THE ONTOLOGICAL PROOF

Continuing on from where he left off above, Sartre will now attempt to show that the transphenomenality of the being of consciousness *requires* the transphenomenality of the being of the phenomenon. He will do this through the *pre-reflective* being of consciousness which he considers to be an ontological proof. But first he will once more drive home the idea that consciousness cannot support the being of the *percipi*.

All consciousness is consciousness *of* something but “to be conscious *of* something is to be confronted with a concrete and full presence which *is not* consciousness.” (p.22) But because this objective presence is fundamentally transcendent[[3]](#footnote-3), if we want “to make the being of the phenomenon depend on consciousness, the object must be distinguished from consciousness not by its *presence* but by its *absence*, not by its plenitude, but by its nothingness” (p.22); the “absence” being all of the *abschattung* (aspects) which are not currently apprehended by the consciousness. As Sartre says, “The truly objectifying intentions are empty intentions, those which aim beyond the present subjective appearance at the infinite totality of the series of appearances.” (p.22) In other words, what makes the object an objectis the consciousness *of* (intention towards) the infinite aspects not currently revealed to consciousness.

If this is true then “the being of the object is pure non-being. It is defined as a *lack*.” (p.22) This is nonsense for Sartre. He asks, “how can non-being be the foundation of being? How can the absent, *expected* subjective become thereby the objective?” (p.22) The *percipi* is “a *plenitude of being*, not a lack – a *presence*, not an absence… the objective will never come out of the subjective nor the transcendent from immanence, nor being from non-being.” (p.23)

At this point, Sartre gives his ontological proof. “Consciousness is consciousness *of* something. This means that transcendence is the constitutive structure of consciousness; that is, that consciousness is born *supported* *by* a being which is not itself.” (p.23) This is fairly straightforward and hinges on Sartre’s conceptions of consciousness as being completely empty, or content-free. If consciousness is truly consciousness of something *and* consciousness exists then there *must* be something external which transcends it. “[C]onsciousness implies in its being a non-conscious and transphenomenal being” (pp.23-24) and it is this that makes it an ontological proof.

So, thus far, we have in consciousness, a being whose existence posits its essence and which is consciousness of a being “whose essence implies its existence; that is, in which appearance lays claim to *being*.” (p.24)

The way I interpret the final half of that equation is as follow; the essence of the phenomenon is the meaning of the (infinite) series of *abschattung* and for the reasons we have seen over sections IV and V (consciousness being unable to support the being of the phenomenon and the ontological proof), this intended object *must* exist. Ergo, its essence implies its existence.

VI. BEING-IN-ITSELF

Sartre wants to give a brief analysis of the transphenomenal being of the phenomenon (being-in-itself) which we found in the last two sections. First he states that “the primary characteristic of the being of an existent is never to reveal itself completely to consciousness. An existent can not be stripped of its being; being is the ever present foundation of the existent; it is everywhere in it and nowhere.” (p.24) It appears in every aspect totally and completely (finite aspect) but also surpasses every individual aspect because it is the sum of all of them (infinite aspect).

However, consciousness can “pass beyond the existent, not toward its being, but toward the *meaning of this being*” (p.25) in effect transcending the ontic towards the ontological. This meaning of the being of the existent, insofar as it reveals itself to consciousness, is the phenomenon of being.

Now, the meaning of being (which you will remember Sartre also calls the ‘essence’ of the existent), the “phenomenon of being[,] is not being… But it indicates being” (p.25). This would seem to place us back into the bind we tried to overcome earlier regarding the whole ‘phenomenon of the being and the being of the phenomenon’ debacle but to avoid this Sartre appears to take refuge in an idea of Heidegger’s which says that even though we are merely present to a phenomenon of being, it “like every primary phenomenon, is immediately disclosed to consciousness… [via] a pre-ontological comprehension of it; that is, one which is not accompanied by a fixing in concepts and elucidation.” (p.25)

So, Sartre has cleaved being into two regions (consciousness and being-in-itself). A significant portion of *Being and Nothingness* will be dedicated to examining how these two regions are related to each other after Sartre has gone to such great lengths to show that they are completely separate from each other. He highlights this division by pointing out that neither *realism* nor *idealism* can gain any traction in his philosophy.

Consciousness, as a purely spontaneous and non-positional self-consciousness (pre-reflective consciousness *of* consciousness), cannot be affected by phenomena, which rules out realism. By the same token, Sartre has shown that “consciousness cannot act upon transcendent being” (p.26), thereby ruling out idealism.

Sartre summarises his preliminary conclusions regarding being-in-itself in three statements:

1. Being (in-itself) is in itself – this means that the phenomenon is completely opaque and *Selbstandigkeit* (‘independent’)

The phenomenon of being has been obscured by a creationist belief in a God who gave being to the world. Under this rubric, being is “tainted with a certain passivity” (p.26) because it is conceived as dependent on God. Being must be “its own support; it does not preserve the least trace of divine creation. In a word, even if it had been created, being-in-itself would be *inexplicable* in terms of creation; for it assumes its being beyond the creation. This is equivalent to saying that being [of the phenomenon] is uncreated” (p.27) This is a difficult passage but Sartre seems to be saying that being-in-itself (the being of the phenomenon), if it exists at all, *must* contain its being wholly within itself as an opaque unity. Even if it *had* been created, any ties to the Creator must be completely severed, or it just can’t be being-in-itself. Of course, Sartre is quite clear that being-in-itself can’t create itself (like consciousness); being-in-itself simply *is*; that is all we can say about it.

Being-in-itself is neither passivity nor activity. “Both of these notions are *human* and designate human conduct or the instruments of human conduct.” (p.27) Without an end in view there can be no activity, and in order to be passive (i.e. used as a means to an end) the thing first has to *be* (therefore the being of the thing is prior to its passivity). Likewise, being-in-itself is beyond negation and affirmation. Playing his intentional card again, Sartre reminds us, “Affirmation is always affirmation of something; that is, the act of affirming is distinguished from the thing affirmed.”[[4]](#footnote-4) (p.27) Being-in-itself is completely whole and self-contained; “an affirmation in which the affirmed comes to fulfil the affirming and is confused with it” (p.27). Therefore the problem we have in trying to attribute affirmation to being-in-itself is that it “is not a connection with itself. It is *itself*. It is an immanence which cannot realise itself, an affirmation which cannot affirm itself, an activity which cannot act, because it is glued to itself.” (p.27)

1. Being (in-itself) is what it is – this means that the ‘thing’ “does not refer to itself as self-consciousness does. It is this self.” (p.28) Selves are consciousness of their own selfhood and therefore cannot *be* this selfhood. The phenomenon, on the other hand, doesn’t *have* unity, it *is* unity.

Sartre asserts that this statement appears *analytic[[5]](#footnote-5)* but in fact, isn’t. This is because “the formula designates a particular region of being, that of *being-in-itself*… The question here then is of a regional principle and is as such synthetical.” (p.28) This refutation seems to turn on the fact that being-in-itself can be contrasted with another kind of being (for-itself, or consciousness) and therefore does indeed contribute to our knowledge.

This second feature means that “[t]ransition, becoming, anything which permits us to say that being is not yet what it will be and that it is already what it is not – all that is forbidden on principle.” (p.29)

1. Being (in-itself) *is* – by this Sartre means being, “can neither be derived from the possible nor reduced to the necessary.” (p.29)

Since “[n]ecessity concerns the connection between ideal propositions but not that of existents” (p.29), being-in-itself is *contingent*. Being-in-itself is also neither possible nor impossible. Possibility belongs to consciousness. Being-in-itself just *is*. Sartre introduces another term here to capture this characteristic of the being of the phenomenon, *de trop*. *De trop* means ‘superfluous’ and refers to the way being-in-itself cannot “derive being from anything, either from another being, or from a possibility, or from a necessary law. Uncreated, without reason for being, without any connection with another being, being-in-itself is *de trop* for eternity.” (p.29)

**Part One**

**The Problem of Nothingness**

**Chapter One – The Origin of Negation**

I. THE QUESTION

The situation as it stands now is we have discovered two regions of being but we have a problem in that they seem completely disconnected. Sartre defines two modes of thought, the *abstract* and the *concrete*. An “abstraction is made when something not capable of existing in isolation is thought of as in an isolated state. The concrete by contrast is a totality which can exist by itself alone.” (p.33) Both consciousness and phenomenon are abstractions since the former “conceals within itself an ontological source in the region of the in-itself… [and the latter] since it must “appear” to consciousness.” (p.34) The concrete totality is “man with the world” (p.34), or ‘being-in-the-world’ as Heidegger would say. Since Sartre thinks trying to unite a relation that has been split is typically unproductive, it is this totality which Sartre will take as his starting point.

He asks two questions which he proposes to answer by investigating human conduct in-the-world:

1. What is the synthetic relation which we call being-in-the-world?
2. What must man and the world be in order for a relation between them to be possible?

These very questions suggest to us the first form of human conduct for our investigation; that of interrogation; we stand “before being in an attitude of interrogation” (p.35). What can we understand from this attitude? First, we can see that “[e]very question presupposes a being who questions and a being which is questioned” (p.35), in other words, a subject and an object. We can also see the content of our questioning, that “*about which*” we question being, and that our question implies an expectation; “I expect from this being a revelation of its being or of its way of being. The reply will be a “yes” or a “no.”” (p.35) Here we have our first encounter with negation and it comes in a triplet:

1. The possibility of non-being in transcendent being. Admitting “*on principle* the possibility of a negative reply…means that we admit to being faced with the transcendent fact of… non-existence...” (p.35) Sartre considers an objection here; maybe we can argue that there is no objective existence of a non-being, just a subjective perspective. He responds by saying that “to destroy the reality of the negation is to cause the reality of the reply to disappear.” (p.36) This response relies on Sartre’s phenomenological approach, because for him the negative reply to our question doesn’t come from the being to us, it *is* the being.
2. The non-being in the knowing of man. The fact that we don’t know the answer to the question before we ask it.
3. The non-being of limitation. This arises because since there *is* one answer there must be other possible answers which have consequently been negated.

And so the conduct of questioning has revealed that we are “encompassed with nothingness. The permanent possibility of non-being, outside us and within, conditions our questions about being.” (p.36)

II. NEGATIONS

Sartre now considers another objection to his notion that negation is real. We never experience any non-being in our ordinary conduct. Sartre gives the example of someone (actually himself) who thinks he has fifteen hundred francs in his wallet but only finds thirteen hundred. Obviously he didn’t find the ‘non-being’ of fifteen hundred francs, he only found the thirteen hundred. Negation only appears “on the level of an act of judgement by which I should establish a comparison between the result anticipated and the result obtained.” (p.37) Nothingness, in other words, is the result of psychic operations and can’t exist by itself; it has the “existence of a noema-correlate; its *esse* resides exactly in its *percipi*.” (p.37)

Sartre rephrases the question; is negation (as a judicative proposition) the origin of nothingness or is nothingness (as something real) the origin of negation?

The whole process has thus far seen us follow this trajectory: the problem of being 🡪 the problem of the question 🡪 the problem of negation.

Sartre first admits that “non-being always appears within the limits of a human expectation” (p.38) but he denies that it necessarily follows that non-beings are therefore subjective in nature. First of all, the negation, while being an interrogative judgement, is not itself a judgement; rather, it is a “pre-judicative attitude. I can question by a look, by a gesture.” (p.38) A questioning is more than a simple question, it is a whole stance towards being. Secondly, the being questioned is not necessarily another person. Framing the act of interrogation as such implies an inter-subjective phenomenon and restricts it to subjectivity. If my car breaks down for example, I would question the carburettor, the spark plugs, etc. And in making this question, “I am prepared… for the eventuality of a disclosure of a non-being… I consider it possible that “there is nothing there” in the carburettor. Thus my question by its nature envelops a certain pre-judicative comprehension of non-being.” (p.39)

Negation can also be apprehended in the notion of *destruction*. Destruction, Sartre says, is an activity which is not primarily judicative in nature. Once more, Sartre recognises that it is only through humans that destruction can appear; “A geological plication, a storm do not destroy – or at least they do not destroy *directly*; they merely modify the distribution of masses of beings… In order for destruction to exist, there must be first a relation of man to being – *i.e.*, a transcendence” (p.39). Destruction “is an essentially human thing and that *it is man* who destroys his cities through the agency of earthquakes” (p.40).

However, Sartre notes that destruction would not be possible as a human activity if the being which is destroyed was not revealed in the first place as being *fragile*. And fragility is “a certain probability of non-being for a given being… A being is fragile if it carries in its being a definite possibility of non-being.” (pp.39-40) Surely, we might still argue that fragility too comes into being through human subjectivity. Something is only fragile if we declare it to be so. Sartre agrees but stresses that we must “acknowledge that destruction supposes a pre-judicative comprehension of nothingness as such and a conduct *in the face of nothingness*.” (p.40) He also asserts that destruction is an objective fact once, and because, fragility has been “impressed upon the very being of this vase, and its destruction would be an irreversible absolute event which I could only verify.” (p.40) This sentence is crucial to understanding Sartre’s thought here and there are two central points as I read it. First, once we have imbued a vase with fragility and even though it is through a subjective act, the vase now *is* fragile. This is reminiscent of what Sartre said earlier about the creationist belief; even if being *had* been created, any ties to the Creator must be completely severed, or it just can’t be being-in-itself; it is what it is even if it was created. Second, once the vase has been destroyed we can’t *un*destroy it by a subsequent subjective act. The destruction is an objective fact, where ‘objective’ if you recall, means an existence which does not depend on my whim. We can also express this in the same way we did for being; i.e. non-being (of phenomena) cannot be reduced to our awareness (the phenomenon) of non-being, hence the phenomenon of *non*-being requires a ‘deeper’, transphenomenality of non-being.

Finally, Sartre suggests that we consider an actual example of a negative judgement “to ask ourselves whether it causes non-being to appear at the heart of being” (p.40). Imagine you have an appointment with Pierre at four o’clock and you arrive late. Upon arriving at the café, you look around searching for your friend but fail to find him. “Is there an intuition of Pierre’s absence, or does negation indeed enter in only with judgement?” (p.41)

First of all, we must note that “in perception there is always the construction of a figure on a ground.” (p.41) Which objects make up the background and which the foreground depends only on the attention and focus of the perceiver. For us the café is the ground upon which Pierre is given as about to appear and “[t]his organisation of the café as the ground is an original nihilation.” (p.41)

Sartre describes Pierre’s absence, not as a nothingness we can find in a particular place in the café, but as an absence which fills the whole café. “The figure which slips constantly between my look and the solid, real objects of the café is precisely a perpetual disappearance; it is Pierre raising himself as nothingness on the ground of the nihilation of the café.” (p.42) This leads Sartre to pronounce that Pierre’s absence is the “intuitive apprehension of a double nihilation” (p.42); the nothingness of the ground (the café) in which all of the objects fade into the background and the nothingness of Pierre’s absence which the ground organises itself around.

For sure, it is our expectation which founds the whole event, but our “expectation has caused the absence of Pierre *to happen* as a real event concerning this café… it [the absence] presents itself as a synthetic relation between Pierre and the setting in which I am looking for him. Pierre absent haunts this café” (p.42). By comparison, other judgements we might make such as “Obama is not in this café” have a purely abstract meaning and fail to establish a real relation between Obama and the café.

This gives Sartre the answer to his earlier question about which is the origin of the other, negation (as a judicative proposition) or nothingness (as a real, concrete non-being); “non-being does not come to things by a negative judgement; it is the negative judgement, on the contrary, which is conditioned and supported by non-being.” (p.42)

Sartre then proceeds to disabuse us of the idea we started out with, namely the notion that negation could ever arise from an expectation. Consider the two judgements we make regarding the money example; “I expected to find fifteen hundred francs in my wallet” and “there are thirteen hundred francs in my wallet”. Both of these are real and objective facts, purely affirmative judgements; where is the negation? “[N]egation is a refusal of existence… [hence, it] cannot in any case *result* from prior affirmations; it is an original and irreducible event.” (p.43)

Thus we find ourselves in the realm of consciousness which, you will recall, is intentional in nature. Therefore, negation doesn’t exist in consciousness as a thing, but as consciousness *of* negation, which means that negation is a real, concrete existent, “a perpetual presence in us and outside of us… nothingness haunt[s] being.” (p.44)

Sartre will now investigate where nothingness comes from and how humans are related to it. To do this, he will critique Hegel and Heidegger before offering us his thoughts on the subject.

III. THE DIALECTICAL CONCEPT OF NOTHINGNESS

For Hegel, the concrete is the Existent with its essence and the abstract is being which passes into essence. Being is therefore “the most abstract of abstractions and the poorest” (p.45) when considered in itself, i.e. separate from its surpassing towards Essence.

Hegel defines nothingness as “simple identity with itself, complete emptiness, absence of determinations and of content” (p.45) and finds that pure being (as a completely abstract concept which must pass towards essence to become concrete) can be defined in exactly the same way. “Pure being and pure nothingness are then the same thing.” (p.45)

Sartre gives three brief objections to this view:

1. Being does not have the same relation to the phenomenon (existent) as the abstract to the concrete. “Being is not one “structure among others,” one moment of the object; it is the very condition of all structures and of all moments.” (p.46)
2. Sartre also rejects the idea that “the being of things “consists in manifesting their essence.” For then a being of that being would be necessary.” (p.46)
3. Finally, if being does consist in realising essence, Sartre expresses doubt that there could even be a pure moment of being free of all traces of this, i.e. complete emptiness and absence of determinations and content.

Hegel also paints being and nothingness as two opposites, a thesis and an antithesis. But this supposes that they are “logically contemporary.” Instead, Sartre thinks non-being is the contradiction of being and this makes it “subsequent to being since it is being, first posited, then denied.” (p.47) Hegel thinks that being and nothingness are empty abstractions each as empty as the other but “he forgets that emptiness is emptiness *of* something. Being is empty *of* all other determinations than identity with itself, but non-being is empty *of being*… being *is* and… nothingness *is not*.” (p.48)

Sartre even considers the situation in which we ask ourselves what there was before a world existed and we answer, “Nothing.” Even here, we can’t grant nothingness a priority over being, precisely because it is us, humans immersed in being, who are positing the nothingness. If we try to remove from this original emptiness the characteristic of being empty *of* this world and the characteristic of *before* we would be left with “a total indetermination which it would be impossible to conceive, even and especially as a nothingness.” (p.49)

Hence, “being has a logical precedence over nothingness… [and] it is from being that nothingness derives concretely its efficacy. This is what we mean when we say that *nothingness haunts being*… *Non-being exists only on the surface of being*.” (p.49)

IV. THE PHENOMENOLOGICAL CONCEPT OF NOTHINGNESS

Sartre notes with approval that Heidegger progressed further than Hegel in his conception of non-being primarily because he describes non-being phenomenologically, rather than giving it an abstract being.

The problem Sartre finds with Heidegger is that he sees transcendence, that is, the project of *Dasein*, as the ground of nothingness. For Heidegger, human reality is first and foremost, *being-in-the-world*, and this mode of being preserves two senses of non-being within it. First, human reality is ‘here’ rather than ‘there’ and second, ‘world’ is only possible on the basis of a surpassing of being (in the projects we are all necessarily involved in). In other words, here we have “nothingness surrounding being on every side and at the same time expelled from being.” (p.51) Sartre rejects Heidegger’s suggestion that transcendence (“the pro-ject of self beyond,”) can found nothingness, and to this end, asks “what must be the original structure of ‘human reality’ [being-in-the-world] in order for it to be able to transcend the world?” (pp.52-53)

To investigate this question, Sartre looks at the notion of distance between two points on a line. There are two ways of apprehending this. We can see the segment first, “[t]hen the negation, expelled from the segment and its length, takes refuge in the two *limits*” (p.54). In this case, the negation is a secondary structure of the object, but we can also direct our attention to the two points, when “[t]he segment disappears as a full, concrete object; it is apprehended in terms of two points as the emptiness, the negativity which separates them.” (p.54) In both cases, negation is present (in the notion of limits or the notion of distance) and cannot be suppressed. Sartre sees this as one example of an infinite number of realities human activity (being-in-the-world) reveals, which while not obviously involving negative judgements do actually contain negativity as a key part of their structure. He calls these *negatites*. Examples include otherness, regret, absence, destruction, etc.

The conclusion is, as we have seen Sartre emphasising all the way through this section, that nothingness is “at the very heart of transcendence and… conditions it” (p.52), in fact, “[n]othingness lies coiled in the heart of being – like a worm.” (p.56)

V. THE ORIGIN OF NOTHINGNESS

So the question of being led us to question that question itself within the realm of human conduct. We then realised that the act of questioning was only possible as negation. Negation in turn, led us to nothingness as its origin and foundation. Nothingness cannot be conceived outside of being or as an abstract notion; instead “[n]othingness must be given at the heart of Being, in order for us to be able to apprehend that particular type of realities which we have called *negatites*.” (p.56) But nothingness cannot come from the full positivity that is being-in-itself; “Being [in-itself] lacks all relation with it” (p.56). So, since nothingness; 1) can’t be outside of being, 2) can’t come from being, and 3) can’t “nihilate itself” (because it is non-being), the question is “*where does Nothingness come from?*” (p.56)

Sartre repeats that nothingness cannot nihilate itself; “only *Being* can nihilate itself… in order to nihilate itself, it must *be*. But Nothingness *is not*.” (p.57) Therefore, we can be assured that there must be a kind of being whose property it is to nihilate nothingness[[6]](#footnote-6), and what’s more, we can be sure that this being isn’t being-in-itself. Sartre is also very concerned to point out here that this being “nihilates Nothingness in its being *in connection with its own being*… *The being by which Nothingness comes to the world must be its own Nothingness*.” (pp.57-58) What this means is that this being doesn’t ‘produce’ nothingness in the sense of creating a transcendent phenomenon accessible to reflection. In that case, the only way nothingness can appear at all is not as a “nihilating act… but [as] an ontological characteristic of the Being required.” (p.58)

In searching for this being, Sartre recommends we return to the question. We have seen that every question presupposes a nothingness at its core and on the basis of this, Sartre suddenly announces that it is “essential therefore that the questioner have the permanent possibility of dissociating himself from the causal series which constitutes being and which can produce only being.” (p.58) Sartre sees the causal series as only valid for positive being (i.e. being-in-itself) and so any negation that occurs must occur outside being, i.e. outside the causal series. In the questioner’s capacity to ask the question, “he is not subject to the causal order of the world; he detaches himself from Being.” (p.58)

There are two forms of nothingness the questioner ‘nihilates’ in making the question:

1. A nihilation of the thing questioned, inasmuch as it is placed into a “*neutral* state” between being and non-being, i.e. able to be answered with a “yes” or a “no”
2. A nihilation of the questioner himself “in wrenching himself from being in order to be able to bring out of himself the possibility of a non-being.” (p.58)

This narrows down our search as we see clearly that it is through the human being, as the only kind of being that can pose a question, that nothingness arises in the world. Sartre contrasts this with Heidegger’s relations of *instrumentality* whereby objects disclose themselves to *Dasein* (human reality). With Sartre, we are a level ‘beneath’ these instrumental relations; every “*negatite* appears… as one of the essential conditions of this relation of instrumentality…[;] negation rise[s] up not as a thing among other things but as the rubric of a category which presides over the arrangement and the redistribution of great masses of being in things.” (p.59)

This prompts yet another question, “What must man be in his being in order that through him nothingness may come to being?” (p.59)

*Freedom*

If humans were locked in being, they could only affect more being. However, since humans can interrogate being, we have seen that they can introduce negation into the world; but we also know that they “must be able to hold it up to view as a totality. [They] must be able to put [themselves] *outside of* being.” (p.59) Although this doesn’t give them the power to annihilate being, it does allow them to *modify* it. Sartre says we are able to affect (our relation to) being through retiring “*beyond a nothingness*” (p.60). He calls this human ability to “secrete a nothingness” (p.60) which isolates us from being, *freedom*. But what is this *freedom* through which nothingness comes into the world?

First of all, we should acknowledge that freedom (as the way nothingness is manifested) is an ontological characteristic of the human being; i.e. not just a “*property* which belongs among others to the essence of the human being.” (p.60) Also, the fact that the human being has the ability to question, tells us that “the human being reposes first in the depths of being and then detaches himself from it by a nihilating withdrawal.” (p.61) As an example of this, Sartre talks about the room of someone who is currently absent. All of the things in the room are objects; “full actualities”, and we can only perceive that they are traces of Pierre, if we have already posited him as absent; “The dog-eared book with the well-read pages is not by itself a book of which Pierre has turned the pages, of which he no longer turns the pages.” (p.61) We can only make this final apprehension *after* introducing a double negation into the situation; “subjectively, to signify that the image *is not* a perception; objectively, to deny that the Pierre of whom I form the image *is here* at this moment.” (pp.61-62)

The subjective negation (the image *is not* a perception) arises because we are *imagining* Pierre in his room. Sartre takes what seems a little detour here into the nature of the image. He says the image carries within it a double negation (and then proceeds to outline three negations); “first it is the nihilation of the world (since the world is not offering the imagined object as an actual object of perception), secondly the nihilation of the object of the image (it is posited as not actual), and finally by the same stroke it is the nihilation of itself (since it is not a concrete, full psychic process).” (p.62)

Returning to the strand we abandoned earlier, Pierre’s absence “requires a negative moment by which consciousness, in the absence of all prior determination, constitutes itself as negation.” (p.62) Because this consciousness of absence is a negation, Sartre says no prior state or motivation could have determined it as part of a causal chain (nihilation cannot derive its source from being); in other words, we are effecting a break with being. All *negatites*, inasmuch as they arise from a negation, are “a perpetual separation of effect from cause, since every nihilating process must derive its source only from itself” (p.63) and what’s more, “Every psychic process of nihilation implies then a cleavage between the immediate psychic past and the present. This cleavage is precisely nothingness.” (p.63)

This may seem obscure but Sartre explains it by asking that we think about what kind of relation exists between the prior consciousness (of being) as motivation and the present state (consciousness of a *negatite*). Precisely *nothing* has slipped in between the two, effectively bracketing the prior consciousness off from the present one. “This nothing is absolutely impassable, just because it is nothing; for in every obstacle to be cleared there is something positive which gives itself as about to be cleared.” (p.64) Sartre continues; consciousness is “conscious of this cleavage in being, but not as a phenomenon which it experiences, rather as a structure of consciousness which it is. Freedom is the human being putting his past out of play by secreting his own nothingness.” (p.64)

*Anguish*

Sartre goes even further now by suggesting that consciousness continually experiences itself as the nihilation of its past being and we therefore ought to be able to “describe a constant mode of consciousness… which would be a consciousness of nihilation… [and since] freedom is the being of consciousness, consciousness ought to exist as consciousness of freedom.” (p.65) Sartre tells us directly that this consciousness of freedom arises in the mode of anguish.

He approves of Kierkegaard’s distinction between fear and anguish “in that fear is fear of beings in the world whereas anguish is anguish before myself… fear is unreflective apprehension of the transcendent and anguish is reflective apprehension of the self” (pp.65-66). Sartre gives the example of a soldier who is fearful in the face of a bombardment but anguished when he considers how he will act when it comes, i.e. will he turn tail or face it bravely and discharge his duty.

He also discusses vertigo in some depth. Vertigo can be experienced as fear, a fear of falling over the precipice. In this mode of being, fear arises from my imagining any number of causes which could lead to me falling; I might slip, the path might crumble, etc. These possibilities arise in a causal chain and are therefore prescribed within the bounds of determinism. “Through these various anticipations, I am given to myself as a thing; I am passive in relation to these possibilities; they come to me from without; in so far as I am also an object in the world” (p.66). My reaction to fear will involve taking steps to minimise these external threats; “I escape fear by the very fact that I am placing myself on a plane where *my own* possibilities are substituted for the transcendent probabilities where human action had no place.” (p.67)

Vertigo can also be experienced as anguish, when I come to realise that these possibilities, inasmuch as they are *mine*, are *not* determined; i.e. it is not certain that I will follow through with them for “they do not have existence sufficient in itself.” (p.67) On the contrary I must sustain their being through acting in the ways required to actualise them. Not just that, there are also a set of possibilities which I have rejected as *mine* (such as *not* paying attention to the stones, running, or even throwing myself over the edge) and these also are a form of “sustained-being”; i.e. “No external cause will remove them. I alone am the permanent source of their non-being.” (p.67) My relation to these possibilities can produce anguish only because they are not strictly determined as an effect from a cause is. If it was strictly determined it would “cease to be *possible*; it would become simply “about-to-happen.”” (p.67)

There is then a relation between my future being and my present being for it is for my future self that I now endeavour to sustain the being and non-being of all of those possibilities which lie before me. “But a nothingness has slipped into the heart of this relation; I *am* not the self which I will be” (p.68) for three reasons:

1. Because time separates us
2. Because what I am is not the foundation of what I will be
3. Because no actual existent can determine what I am going to be

And yet, Sartre reminds us, despite *not* being my future self, I *am* already what I will be or I wouldn’t care anymore than I care about any other future selves. This leads to the observation that, “*I am the self which I will be, in the mode of not being it*.” (p.68) And anguish is precisely my consciousness of this.

Nothing prevents me from leaping over the precipice but my future self will be the one making this decision. Anguish arises when I realise that “the self which I am depends on the self which I am not yet to the exact extent that the self which I am not yet does not depend on the self which I am.” (p.69)

The above is anguish in the face of the future but anguish also arises in the face of the past. Sartre’s example here is that of a gambler who decides not to gamble anymore but sees all of his resolutions melt away when he nears the gaming table. This is typically explained away in materialistic terms as a struggle between reason and the passions, however Sartre denies that there is anything “in us which resembles an inner *debate* as if we had to weigh motives and incentives before deciding. The earlier resolution of not playing anymore” is always *there*” (p.69) and the gambler will turn to it for help at the critical juncture, but he will only find anguish when he apprehends “precisely the total inefficacy of the past resolution. It is there doubtless but fixed, ineffectual, surpassed by the very fact that I am conscious *of* it.” (p.70) It is this feature that the reason vs. passions explanation fails to account for, namely why the past resolution, despite still being there, is so ineffectual.

Everything we have already discussed surfaces once more. There is a break in the causal chain, this time between the present and the past, a break created by a nothingness which has slipped in. The resolution is still there but the gambler *is* it in the mode of *not-being* it. “In order for it [my past resolution] to come to my aid once more, I must remake it *ex nihilo* and freely… I *must rediscover* the fear of financial ruin or of disappointing my family, *etc*.” (p.70)

Next, Sartre considers the objection that anguish only arises out of an “ignorance of the underlying psychological determinism.” (p.70) There are two possibilities for anguish from here; first, “anguish… is actually an unrealised ignorance of this determinism” (p.71), that is to say, anguish is genuine (“unrealised”) ignorance of the situation, in which case we can take anguish at face value, i.e. an apprehension of freedom. Second, “one may claim that anguish is consciousness of being ignorant of the real causes of our acts.” (p.71) In this case, anguish would arise from not knowing what “monstrous motives” lurk within us and would “suddenly release guilty acts.” (p.71) If this was true though, “we should suddenly appear to ourselves as *things in the world*” (p.71) and anguish would give way to *fear*, as a concerned apprehension of transcendent things in the world.

Another way of stating what we have already realised is that our freedom is characterised by the existence of a nothing between motives and act; “It is not *because* I am free that my act is not subject to the determination of motives; on the contrary, the structure of motives as ineffective is the condition of my freedom.” (p.71) We can’t describe this nothing, since it *is not*, but we know it arises from the human. Motives are ineffective because seeing there are no contents in consciousness (a fundamental tenet of Sartre’s phenomenology), there is never a motive *in* consciousness, rather, there is only a motive *for* consciousness. Since the motive then appears as a phenomenon presented to consciousness, it can’t carry any force behind it. It is, as Sartre says, “transcendence in immanence” and because consciousness posits it, only consciousness can confer on the motive its meaning and importance.

Sartre now elucidates the two general and original nihilations that lie at the base of all transcendent negation:

1. The nihilating structure of the pre-reflective cogito – consciousness *is not* its own motive (it has no content)
2. The nihilating structure of temporality – consciousness confronts its past and its future as facing a self which it is in the mode of not-being

Now, we take another little detour as Sartre shifts gear to talk about the *self* as it relates to anguish. The *self* is the *essence* of man and, “Essence is all that human reality apprehends in itself as *having been*.” (p.72) This seems to be another way of talking about the past which the human *is* in the mode of *not- being* it. Sartre simply restates his earlier thesis about the past, substituting in essence; “Anguish as the manifestation of freedom in the face of self means that man is always separated by a nothingness from his essence [past].” (p.72)

Back to the story. Next, Sartre considers an objection, if freedom is a permanent structure of the consciousness and anguish manifests it, then why isn’t anguish also a permanent state of affectivity? Sartre’s answer turns on the way we are normally engaged in the world and what we need to do to come face to face with our freedom (and therefore feel anguish). Normally, we find ourselves pre-reflectively ‘lost in a situation’, just acting in the midst of objects and using them to achieve our projects; “The consciousness of man *in action* is non-reflective consciousness. It is consciousness of something” (p.74) Sartre talks about how when he is writing he isn’t *reflecting* on his writing; he’s just writing; “I cannot write the words without transcending them toward the sentence” (p.74), all within the framework of instruments which he apprehends for his use; in general, “I discover my possibilities by realising them” (p.74), i.e. pre-reflectively.

Even though in our *everyday* mode of being we aren’t reflectively aware of our freedom (and therefore we aren’t in anguish), we are still free in the structure of consciousness. We can apprehend this freedom anytime through a reflective act but this requires the “apprehension of the work as such as *my* possibility. I must place myself directly opposite it and realise my relation to it.” (p.74) It turns out this isn’t so easy to do. Sartre identifies three things we must do to be brought face to face with our freedom:

1. We must discover our *essence* as *what we have been*, i.e. wanting to write this book
2. We must discover the nothingness separating my freedom from this essence, i.e. I *have been* wanting to write but *nothing* can compel me to do so
3. We must discover the nothingness separating us from our future selves, i.e. it is a permanent possibility that I will abandon this writing later

We spend almost all of our lives on this “plane of action” because it is reassuring. It eludes the anguish that would grip us were we to reflect on our absolute freedom. Living this way, we ‘always already’[[7]](#footnote-7) apprehend the meaning of events, without being brought face to face with the fact that “it is I who confer on the alarm clock its exigency – I and I alone.” (p.76)

Sartre draws an analogy between the ‘plane of action’ which is free from anguish and everyday morality free from *ethical* anguish. In the same way that we experience anguish when we reflect on the *nothing* that separates us from our past and future, we feel *ethical* anguish when we consider our relation to our values, because once again, freedom plays its hand; “[value] can be revealed only to an active freedom which makes it exist as value by the sole fact of recognising it as such… my freedom is the unique foundation of values and… *nothing*, absolutely nothing, justifies me in adopting this or that particular value” (p.76).

Just as before though, we are insulated somewhat from this *ethical* anguish because we are immediately engaged in a world of values; “Our being is immediately “in situation”” (p.77). All this means is that we are ‘thrust’ into a world and only come to know ourselves in relation to this world of pre-existing values; “We discover ourselves… in a world peopled with demands, in the heart of projects” (p.77) It is only when we hold this (immediately given) world at a distance from ourselves and reflect on it that we experience anguish when we realise the freedom we *are* extends all the way to our value judgements; *nothing* justifies the values we hold.

Sartre next investigates the way we flee from anguish. He starts by asserting that psychological determinism is primarily a flight from anguish. It denies that human reality is transcendent in nature (emerging beyond its essence) and reduces “us to *never being anything but what we are*” (p.79) thereby making us pure being-in-itself. Sartre dismisses psychological determinism as something not given to us by reflective intuition, availing “nothing against the *evidence* of freedom; hence it is given as a faith to take refuge in” (p.79).

There are two primary ways we flee anguish; before the future and from the past. In the former, even though I can’t help constituting *all* possibilities before me (including throwing myself off the precipice or *not* writing the book) I “force myself… to *be distracted* from the constitution of other possibilities which contradict *my* possibility” (p.80). I try to apprehend the possibilities hostile to *my* possibility (which I have chosen as staying on the path or writing the book) as logical, purely *conceivable* eventualities; in other words, I try to hide from myself the fact that these undesirable possibilities are also *myself*.

Fleeing anguish from the past is an attempt to flee “my very transcendence in so far as it sustains and surpasses my essence. I assert that I *am* my essence in the mode of being of the in-itself.” (p.81) In this situation, we try to force our freedom (which would disturb us if it were apprehended directly) into “the heart of my essence – *i.e.*, of my self.” (p.81) In this way, *I* am no longer free as a transcendent consciousness, rather my *self* is free, but since it is also has the being of an opaque in-itself, this freedom is ‘tamed’ by a solid, predictable essence (constituted in the past). Moreover, since freedom is not as it appears to consciousness, “*it is the freedom of the Other*.” (p.82)

Sartre summarises this section as follows:

“Such then is the totality of processes by which we try to hide anguish from ourselves; we apprehend our particular possible by avoiding considering all other possibles, which we make the possibles of an undifferentiated Other. The chosen possible we do not wish to see as sustained in being by a pure nihilating freedom, and so we attempt to apprehend it as engendered by an object already constituted, which is no other than our self, envisaged and described as if it were another person.” (p.82)

It is clear that we can’t “overcome aguish, for we *are* anguish.” (p.82) We also can’t avoid it for the same reason. Since we *are* what we want to veil, we can only hide it if we are acquainted with it. Not only that, “I must think of it constantly in order to take care not to think of it.” (p.83)

However, Sartre does point out something interesting here. *Fleeing* anguish and *being* anguish cannot be the same thing; “If I am my anguish in order to flee it, that presupposes that I can decenter myself in relation to what I am, that I can be anguish in the form of “not-being it,”” (p.83). This is called *bad faith* and is what we will look at in the next section.

**Chapter Two – Bad Faith**

I. BAD FAITH AND FALSEHOOD

Human beings don’t just disclose *negatites* in the world; they can also take “negative attitudes with respect to [themselves]” (p.86). Sartre elects to examine one particular attitude in which consciousness directs negation inwards towards itself. This attitude he calls *bad faith*.

The first thing we have to do is distinguish bad faith from falsehood. Lying is a negative attitude but it aims only at the transcendent; by which Sartre means objects outside of consciousness. He defines the liar as, “affirming truth within himself, denying it in his words, and denying that negation as such.” (p.87) This gives us a double negation which rests on the transcendent; “the fact expressed is transcendent since it does not exist, and the original negation rests on a *truth*; that is, on a particular type of transcendence.” (pp.87-88) “The lie is a behaviour of transcendence.” (p.88) Of course, the liar is in full knowledge of the truth *and* the fact that he is lying about it. The lie only succeeds as negation because the liar and the person being lied to are ontologically distinct; “By the lie consciousness affirms that it exists by nature as *hidden from the Other*” (p.88). This cannot be the same for bad faith since bad faith is a lie told to oneself; it “implies in essence the unity of a *single* consciousness.” (p.89) Since the “being of consciousness is consciousness of being” (p.89), this project of bad faith must be, not just comprehended by consciousness, but “I must know the truth very exactly *in order* to conceal it more carefully” (p.89). So, how can bad faith be effected?

Sartre notes that the popular solution for many people came in the form of Freud’s notion of the unconscious. Freud has cleaved the “psychic whole into two”; the *id* (unconscious) and the *Ego* (consciousness). I *am* the Ego and I *am not* the id. In this framework, the motivations behind my actions come from an inscrutable unconscious and as such are not available for my conscious inspection. Sartre points out that this “means that I stand in relation to *my* “id,” in the position of the *Other*.” (p.91) Two things follow from this. First, “the discovery of [the] truth will necessitate the cooperation of the psychoanalyst, who appears as the *mediator* between my unconscious drives and my conscious life.” (p.91) Second, I can’t trust my own intuitions, but must rather “apply to my case *from the outside*, abstract schemes and rules already learned.” (p.91) This is anathema to Sartre the phenomenologist who values “the certainty which intuition confers” (p.91) as opposed to the “always increasing probability of scientific hypotheses.” (p.92)

Sartre finds two further faults with the theory of the unconscious:

1. The censor itself is in bad faith.

The id seems to be sensitive to analysis. Freud reports “resistance when at the end of the first period the doctor is approaching the truth.” (p.92) Sartre asks where this resistance could possibly be coming from. It can’t be the Ego because, as the consciousness of the patient, it actively wants to discover the truth. It also can’t be emanating from the repressed content in the id because it is actively attempting to manifest itself in consciousness. The only place left is the *censor*, which is a gatekeeper of sorts (on the unconscious side of the equation) whose job is to repress certain memories that might disturb the Ego.

This means that the censor must know what it is repressing, i.e. it “must choose and in order to choose must be aware of so doing.” (p.93) But this isn’t all. Since it is actively instigating resistance, the censor must have a “comprehension of the end toward which the questions of the psychoanalyst are leading, and an act of synthetic connection by which it compares the *truth* of the repressed complex to the psychoanalytic hypothesis which aims at it.” (p.93) These complex operations imply that the censor is conscious of itself; i.e. “consciousness (of) being conscious of the drive to be repressed, but precisely *in order not to be conscious of it*.” (p.94) This is a precise description of bad faith, which means that psychoanalysis has not brought us any closer to an explanation.

1. The fact that the repressed content is supposed to “disguise itself” in order to slip by the censor in symbolic form creates additional problems.

This ability implies in the repressed content the consciousness of being repressed, the consciousness of having been forced back because of what it is, and a project of disguise. None of this can be explained.

Finally, Sartre mentions contemporary studies by a Viennese psychiatrist, Stekel, which revealed that pathological frigidity in certain women was actually being created by conscious effort on the parts of the women. They would apparently distract themselves in advance of the pleasure which they dread in the sexual act, which meant that “the efforts taken in order not to be present to the experienced pleasure imply the recognition that the pleasure is experienced; they imply it *in order to deny it*.” (p.96) There is no need to talk of an unconscious here.

II. PATTERNS OF BAD FAITH

This section investigates specific examples of bad faith to answer the question, “What must be the being of man if he is to be capable of bad faith?” (p.96) All of the examples which follow demonstrate bad faith as being possible only because of “the double property of the human being, who is at once a *facticity* and a *transcendence*.” (p.98)[[8]](#footnote-8) Normally, these two properties are coordinated in an individual but bad faith works to keep them separate so that one can drift from one to the other; in effect, bad faith “affirm[s] facticity as *being* transcendence and transcendence as *being* facticity, in such a way that at the instant when a person apprehends the one, he can find himself abruptly faced with the other.” (p.98) Sartre also refers to this dual property of human beings in Heideggerian terminology as appealing to our *being-in-the-midst-of-the-world* (being as an inert object surrounded by other inert objects) to escape from our *being-in-the-world* (being as consciousness).

*The Flirt*

Sartre’s first example is a woman who is on a first date with a man. She is aware of the sexual intentions of the man but wishes to maintain the “charm” of the date by not committing herself. So, in the face of his advances or comments, she disarms them of any sexual meaning. But then, he takes her hand, forcing a decision from her. She must now either leave her hand there (actively reciprocate his intentions) or withdraw it (robbing the moment of its “troubled and unstable harmony” which gives it its charm). What does she do? She “leaves her hand there, but she *does not notice* that she is leaving it.” (p.97)

There are a number of procedures this woman is using to maintain herself in bad faith. First towards her companion, she denies any transcendence to his actions which are sincere and respectful, reducing them to brute facts (facticity); “to being only what they are; that is, to existing in the mode of the in-itself.” (p.97) She denies they are anything *but* respectful ‘things’. But at the same time, she enjoys his desire and accepts his factual acts of respect and sincerity as being more than they are (i.e. transcendent or as Sartre says, “as not being what [they are]” (p.98)). And then she swings the other way again, interpreting his desire as a ‘respect-thing’. In this way, the flirt plays on the facticity/transcendence nature of the human being to enjoy desires she would otherwise be ashamed of.

Secondly, towards herself, the flirt achieves the “divorce of the body from the soul” (p.97) which lets her conflate her own facticity and transcendence. Leaving her hand in his, she deliberately and consciously “realises herself as *not being* her own body, and she contemplates it as though from above as a passive object to which events can *happen* but which can neither provoke them nor avoid them because all its possibilities are outside of it” (p.98), in other words, she converts her transcendence (the man holding *her* hand) into a brute fact (the man holding *a* hand); after all, she is not her body, right? She denies any transcendence with regard to her body; “the hand rests inert between the warm hands of her companion – neither consenting nor resisting – a thing.” (p.97)

*The Critic*

Another example is someone who criticises me. “If I were only what I *am*… [I would have to] question myself scrupulously, and perhaps be compelled to recognise the truth in it. But thanks to transcendence, I am not subject to all that I am.” (p.99) Since I am *really* my transcendence, a mode of being completely constituted in freedom, not my past or my past actions, I can “flee from myself, I escape myself, I leave my tattered garment in the hands of the fault-finder.” (p.99) In other words, I don’t have to acknowledge the criticism that I am boastful because I know I am not a boastful thing *in my being*; I am something different, namely, a free transcendence that stands in relation to boastfulness. Even though I may boast, I (in my being) am not a ‘boaster’ so the criticism doesn’t touch the *real* me. The problem here is that in escaping my past actions (my facticity) by seeing myself as pure transcendence, I must “affirm here that I *am* my transcendence in the mode of being of a thing” (p.99); thereby making my transcendence into nothing more than a fact, i.e. falling into bad faith.

*The Waiter*

Next Sartre considers a waiter in a café. He notices how hard he is working to be the perfect waiter… a little *too* hard. It seems to us that he is playing a game, amusing himself in some way. Sartre concludes he is playing… “playing at *being* a waiter in a café.” (p.102) All people in all jobs *play* at being, *pretend* to be, whatever it is they say they are. They have to do this; “A grocer who dreams is offensive to the buyer, because such a grocer is not wholly a grocer.” (p.102)

The waiter has to play at being a waiter because he cannot be “immediately a café waiter in the sense that this inkwell *is* an inkwell, or the glass is a glass [i.e. a being-in-itself]” (p.102). The waiter knows what it ‘means’ to be a waiter (getting up early to be on time, sweeping the floor, etc.), he knows the rights which follow (the right to tips, to join a union, etc.); all these are transcendent concepts, abstract possibilities. The waiter *has* *to be* the waiter precisely because he *is not* a waiter. If I *was* a waiter, I wouldn’t *have to be* one; “I am separated from him [a *real* waiter] as the object from the subject, separated *by nothing*… I cannot be he, I can only play *at being* him; that is, imagine to myself that I am he.” (p.103) He attempts to realise a being-in-itself of the waiter as if he wasn’t a completely free transcendence merely conferring value upon the duties and rights that flow from being a waiter. Despite this, he *is* a waiter in some sense, otherwise he could call himself anything; “But if I am one, this cannot be in the mode of being in-itself. I am a waiter in the mode of *being what I am not*.” (p.103) Here we see the waiter trying to turn his transcendence (a completely free consciousness of being) into his own facticity (a waiter).

Naturally, this doesn’t only apply to jobs. It also applies to any attitude or action we might adopt; “I cannot say either that I *am* here or that I *am* not here, in the sense that we say “that box of matches *is* on the table”; this would be to confuse my “being-in-the-world” with a “being-in-the-midst-of-the-world.”… On all sides I escape being and yet – I am.” (p.103)

*Emotions – Sadness*

How about emotions, such as sadness? Surely we would want to say that I am my sadness in the mode of being what I am; that is, completely, totally *being* sad. But even here, sadness is nothing more than the “intentional unity” of our conduct. It is the *meaning* of certain *attitudes* that animate our conduct when we are sad; the dull look with which we view the world, our bowed shoulders, and so on. But even while we are feeling sad, that is to say, adopting these attitudes, we know that it won’t last; “Let a stranger suddenly appear and I will lift up my head, I will assume a lively cheerfulness.” (p.104)

In addition, sadness is a *conduct*, that is, something consciousness *does*, not something consciousness *is*; “I do not possess the property of *affecting myself with being*. If I make myself sad, I must continue to make myself sad from beginning to end… There is no inertia in consciousness.” (p.104) We are never sad like as in a ‘being-sad,’ rather we are a ‘making-oneself-sad’. This is clear because if I *am* sad, I would not have to *make myself* sad by adopting those attitudes or performing certain actions.

*Sincerity (1)*

What is sincerity? It is an ideal that claims it “is necessary that a man be *for himself* only what he *is*.” (p.101) It is the requirement that we each act in accordance with who we really are, not dissembling or pretending. Put this way, it sounds like it is the opposite of bad faith but Sartre shows that it is simply another form of it.

Sincerity, as Sartre has defined it, is “precisely the definition of the in-itself” (p.101). Only the in-itself can be what it is, devoid of negation, and therefore lacking freedom and the possibilities that accrue on its foundation. “If man is what he is, bad faith is forever impossible and candour ceases to be his ideal and becomes instead his being.” (p.101) However, the human being (consciousness) is not what it is, rather it is *consciousness* of what it is, that is to say, consciousness of being. Nothingness lies at the heart of its being. Sincerity is therefore an impossible ideal for consciousness; if it *was* possible, then what we would be saying is that it is possible for consciousness (a fluid, translucent, form of being filled with nothingness) to become in-itself (an opaque, definite *thing* with no possibilities for being); “what can be the significance of the ideal of sincerity except as a task impossible to achieve, of which the very meaning is in contradiction with the structure of my consciousness.” (p.105) It is an irreconcilable contradiction with what consciousness is because “as soon as we posit ourselves as a certain being… then by that very positing we surpass this being – and that not toward another being but toward emptiness, toward *nothing*.” (p.106) What Sartre means here is that the act alone of identifying ourselves as a certain being is a demonstration that we aren’t that being because if we really *were* that being, we wouldn’t need to, in fact we *couldn’t*, posit ourselves as it; we would just *be* it.

Sartre spends the next half page briefly considering, and rejecting, how we might derive some semblance of sincerity for ourselves. First, I might try to determine myself as something but, as we saw above, in the very act of trying to determine what I am, I must first constitute myself as a thing thereby exerting my freedom to transcend what I think I am. Second, can we appeal to prior purposes and motivations pushing us to certain actions? No, because this would be to grant that the flow of our states of consciousness is subject to causal forces, as if it was a succession of physical states. Third, can we anchor sincerity through ‘drives’ within us? No, because they are not “forces of nature”, they must be perpetually given meaning and value through our own reflective efforts. Finally, Sartre considers passing judgement on our character, or nature, as a means to sincerity but he rejects this too, as in doing so we lift ourselves up above a past which we, in the present, are not subject to.

*Sincerity – The Homosexual and the Champion of Sincerity*

Sartre discusses a homosexual who feels intolerable guilt over his sexual identity. Although recognising his homosexual inclinations and admitting to each sexual encounter he has had with a partner of the same gender, he refuses to consider himself a homosexual (Sartre uses the term ‘paederast’ here but we need not conflate homosexuality with paederasty). For the homosexual, his previous indiscretions were always somehow atypical or all in the past or the results of a restless search; anything but “the manifestations of a deeply rooted tendency” (p.107). At the same time, his friend demands that the homosexual acknowledge his homosexuality and stop being so duplicitous. Sartre asks who is in bad faith here? The homosexual or the champion of sincerity?

In one sense, the homosexual is right in refusing to let himself be called a thing. He is not a homosexual in the mode of being one, that is, as a chair is a chair, nor is he determined by his past actions, rather he is separated from them by a nothingness. However, there is another sense in which he is wrong. What he needs to add to his initial denial of being a ‘homosexual-thing’ is the qualification; “To the extent that a pattern of conduct is defined as the conduct of a [homosexual] and to the extent that I have adopted this conduct, I am a [homosexual]” (p.108). But he doesn’t. In effect, he is playing on the word ‘being’. When he says he *is not* a homosexual, he is interpreting *not-being* as *not-being-in-itself* but then he uses this interpretation in the context of not-being-the-meaning-of-his-conduct. The homosexual is not a homosexual in the mode of being one, he is a homosexual in the mode of *not* being one; he is a homosexual in so far as homosexuality is the transcendent meaning of his conduct.” (Cox, 2006, p.114)[[9]](#footnote-9) He is taking his facticity for his transcendence and is in bad faith.

What about the champion of sincerity? He demands that the homosexual admit to his homosexuality by telling him that he ought to be in good faith. Sincerity requires him to be honest with himself. So the critic is asking his friend to “be what he is in order no longer to be what he is.” (p.108) If he constitutes himself as a ‘homosexual-thing’, he will no longer be that thing because he will have transcended it.

The truth, according to Sartre, is that the making of someone into an in-itself is reassuring to us because it “removes a disturbing freedom from a trait and which aims at henceforth constituting all the acts of the Other as consequences following strictly from his essence.” (p.108) He is demanding that the freedom of the homosexual freely constitute itself as a thing before him so that he can return that freedom – “like a suzerain to his vassal.” (p.109)

*Sincerity (2)*

Perhaps sincerity can still apply in the relations of a person with him or herself. Sartre denies this too. “Who cannot see that the sincere man constitutes himself as a thing in order to escape the condition of a thing by the same act of sincerity?” (p.109) He imagines someone confessing that he is evil, thereby exchanging “his disturbing “freedom-for-evil” for an inanimate character of evil; he *is* evil… he is what he is. But by the same stroke, he escapes from that *thing*, since it is he who contemplates it, since it depends on him to maintain it under his glance…” (p.109) We can see that same pattern operating here once more; the trading off between facticity and transcendence which underlies all bad faith; “the sincere man constitutes himself as what he is *in order not to be it*.” (p.109)

Since sincerity demands that we conform ourselves to what we really are, its underlying assumption is that we are fundamentally, already in the mode of the in-itself. However, if this was true – if “I were sad or cowardly in the way in which this inkwell is an inkwell – the possibility of bad faith could not even be conceived. Not only should I be unable to escape from my being; I could not even imagine that I could escape from it.” (p.110) Sartre expresses this same idea a different way when he says that in bad faith “I can try to apprehend myself as “*not being cowardly*,” when I *am* so, only on condition that the “being cowardly” is itself “in question” at the very moment when it exists.” (p.111) This leads him to assert that “in order for me not to be cowardly, I must in some way also be cowardly.” (p.111) Sartre doesn’t mean we must be a little cowardly as in a certain degree of cowardly, rather he means, “I must at once both be and not be totally and in all respects a coward.” (p.111) In other words, bad faith in this sense requires that ***consciousness not be what it is***, which Sartre explains as meaning that “there be an imponderable difference separating being from non-being in the mode of being of human reality.” (p.111)

Everything stated in this last paragraph about bad faith and *not-being* is equally applicable to bad faith and *being*. I can try to constitute myself as *being courageous* when I *am not*, but this is only possible if “not being courageous” is “in question” at the same time. Hence in order for me to be courageous, I must not be and be totally and in all respects a courageous person. In other words, bad faith requires that ***consciousness be what it is not***.

It is the last part of the final sentences of the last two paragraphs that Sartre has been building towards. Bad faith exists, we have seen it illustrated in several cases, and for bad faith to be possible, “human reality, in its most immediate being, in the intra-structure of the pre-reflective *cogito*, must be what it is not and not be what it is.” (p.112)

III. THE “FAITH” OF BAD FAITH

In this section Sartre finally answers the question he raised in section 1, namely, if lying requires a deceiver and someone deceived, exactly how does bad faith operate when the deceiver and the deceived are one and the same?

The problem is that we are talking about bad faith using the same terms we use with falsehood. Bad faith is not deception, it is *faith*. Deception requires certainty, i.e. the deceiver must know the truth in order to lie about it, but bad faith is precisely characterised by a *lack* of certainty. We have seen that bad faith is all about blurring the distinction between facticity and transcendence, obfuscating the situation in the process. Hence, bad faith is belief, where ‘belief’ means “the adherence of being to its object when the object is not given or is given indistinctly” (p.112).

But, we might still wonder, how can we believe in concepts which we have created expressly to persuade ourselves of something? “We must note in fact that the project of bad faith must be itself in bad faith” (p.112), because as Sartre says, in truth, we have never *really* persuaded ourselves of anything; “at the very moment when I was disposed to put myself in bad faith, I of necessity was in bad faith with respect to this same disposition.” (p.112) The world of the human being (as apprehended by consciousness, where being is what it is not and is not what it is) seldom admits of certainties, and although we do find evidence, it is not conclusive, it is “non-persuasive” and yet it is from this non-persuasive evidence that we must make our decisions and live our lives. “Bad faith apprehends evidence but it is resigned in advance to not being fulfilled by this evidence… [so bad faith] decides on the exact nature of its requirements. It stands forth in the firm resolution *not to demand too much*, to count itself satisfied when it is barely persuaded.” (p.113) This is what Sartre means when he says the project of bad faith is in bad faith. Before it even begins to interpret the world, it has *already decided that it doesn’t require much evidence to support its beliefs.*

We must be clear that bad faith isn’t a “reflective, voluntary decision, but… a spontaneous determination of our being… bad faith is a type of being in the world” (p.113). Sartre compares *putting ourselves* in bad faith to going to sleep and *being in* bad faith with dreaming. He also notes that it is just as difficult to get out of as it is to wake oneself up. The reason for this is precisely because we don’t actively reflect on how we exist in the world; we just slip into the mode of bad faith, naturally, as it were. Sartre does identify bad faith as being *metastable[[10]](#footnote-10)*, but asserts that “bad faith is conscious of its structure, and it has taken precautions by deciding that the metastable structure is the structure of being and that non-persuasion is the structure of all convictions.” (p.113) It has therefore insulated itself from questions and is another example of how bad faith is in bad faith itself.

*Good faith* is the opposite of this. Good faith is believing in something because, even though the evidence is non-persuasive (I can’t appeal to any self-evident intuition to be certain), it genuinely seems to be true. There is no deception or conflation of terms here. Sartre’s example is his belief that his friend Pierre feels friendship for him. He can never be certain how Pierre feels but considering the evidence, he decides to believe it.

So, bad faith *and* good faith are both beliefs. However, Sartre follows this up by saying that “[t]o believe is to know that one believes, and to know that one believes is no longer to believe.” (p.114) This seems to be because once one realises that one holds a belief, one is no longer ‘pre-reflectively’ engaged in the world, no longer on the ‘plane of action’, rather one is reflecting on the ‘believing’ which necessarily puts one at a distance from it. The articulation that the belief is *mere* belief is enough to put it into question and highlights the negation that lies at the heart of every belief.

This prompts Sartre to equate good faith with sincerity; “The ideal of good faith (to believe what one believes) is, like that of sincerity (to be what one is), an ideal of being-in-itself.” (p.115) So, good faith is just as impossible as sincerity. This gives us the perfect excuse; even though I can’t believe (in good faith) that I am courageous, since *every* belief involves not quite believing, that is just the nature of belief and I can proceed with my belief.

Despite all of this, there is still a fundamental distinction between good and bad faith and it lies in the goal of each; “Good faith wishes to flee the “not-believing-what-one-believes” by finding refuge in being. Bad faith flees being by taking refuge in “not-believing-what-one-believes.” (p.115) Sartre also formulates this in terms of being; “Good faith seeks to flee the inner disintegration of my being in the direction of the in-itself which it should be and is not. Bad faith seeks to flee the in-itself by means of the inner disintegration of my being. But it denies this very disintegration as it denies that it is itself bad faith.” (p.116)

Sartre concludes this section by stating that bad faith is “an immediate, permanent threat to every project of the human being… The origin of this risk is the fact that the nature of consciousness simultaneously is to be what it is not and not to be what it is.” (p.116) It seems that our own mode of being automatically predisposes us to bad faith.

**Part Two**

**Being-for-Itself**

**Chapter One – Immediate Structures of the For-Itself**

I. PRESENCE TO SELF

Sartre now wishes to return to the pre-reflective *cogito* and flesh out some of what the for-itself is. When we question the *cogito*, he says, it “never gives out anything other than what we ask of it”. Descartes questioned it regarding its “functional aspect – “*I doubt, I think*.”” (p.119) From here he tried to pass to existential dialectic but without any connecting thread, he “fell into the error of substance.” (p.119) Husserl, he claims, never got beyond functional description but rather locked himself inside the *cogito*. Heidegger jumps straight into an existential dialectic, bypassing the *cogito* completely and analysing Dasein as a “self-understanding of its own possibilities and as a concern and “care” for being.” (Catalano, 1974, p.97) Sartre denies that there can be any such understanding without a requisite consciousness *of* that understanding. We must therefore start our investigation from the *cogito*.

The preceding chapters have revealed that consciousness “must necessarily be what it is not and not be what it is” (p.120). Sartre wants to now ask what this means for consciousness.

 Since the being of consciousness “is a being such that in its being, its being is in question” (p.120), the “being of consciousness does not coincide with itself in a full equivalence” (p.120). Complete coincidence with itself is the form of being of the in-itself. The in-itself is wholly what it is and lacks even the tiniest trace of negation or emptiness in being. Such being epitomises the principle of identity, A = A, and which Sartre defines as meaning that “A exists in an infinite compression with an infinite density.” (p.120)

Consciousness, on the other hand, is a “decompression of being” (p.121). Taking the example of belief, Sartre points out that we cannot say my belief is belief, as in A = A; rather, “my belief is the consciousness (of) belief” (p.121).[[11]](#footnote-11) And consciousness (of) belief is *not* simply belief. As soon as the *cogito* apprehends this belief, “it is *no longer only belief*; that is, it is already no longer belief, it is troubled belief.” (p.121) This makes sense because for anything to be apprehended in the first place, there must also be something which *does* the *apprehending* and this something must be “radically different” although still lie “within the indissoluble unity of one and the same being” (p.121). In Sartrean terms, consciousness can only be consciousness (of) belief by allowing a nothingness to slip in between the pre-reflective consciousness and the belief.

Sartre considers an objection. What if someone claims that we can still find identity (and thereby the in-itself) with the statement, “consciousness (of) belief *is* consciousness (of) belief”? This doesn’t work because it makes belief an object for consciousness (thereby taking us to the level of reflection) and Sartre has already shown that prior to reflection there must be a pre-reflective *cogito* that does not posit an object. It is this pre-reflective *cogito* we are, and *must*, start our investigation with.

Moving on, Sartre notes that the “consciousness (of) belief, while irreparably altering belief, does not distinguish itself from belief; it *exists in order to* perform the act of faith.” (p.122) Thus the consciousness (of) belief is belief and belief is the consciousness (of) belief (what Sartre calls the “double game of reference” (p.122)), although not in the mode of identity. They are “radically different although still within the indissoluble unity of one and the same being.” (p.121)

The deep dependence which holds between the two can be seen in the way that “neither belief nor pleasure nor joy can exist *before* being conscious; consciousness is the measure of their being; yet it is no less true that belief, owing to the very fact that it can exist only as *troubled*, exists from the start as escaping itself, as shattering the unity of all the concepts in which one can wish to inclose it.” (p.122) So, Sartre is denying both idealism and realism again here. There can be no belief without a consciousness (of) belief (this is a denial of realism) but at the same time since belief never exists except as *troubled*, our ‘idea’ of it can never be sufficient and complete (rejection of idealism).

So, belief and consciousness (of) belief are one and the same thing but if we try to reflect on this unity and “grasp this being, it slips through our fingers, and we find ourselves faced with a pattern of duality, with a game of reflections. For consciousness is a reflection (*reflet*), but *qua* reflection it is exactly the one reflecting (*reflechissant*), and if we attempt to grasp it as reflecting, it vanishes and we fall back on the reflection.” (p.122) What this seems to mean is that since consciousness is intentional it is a reflection (of whatever it is consciousness *of*; in this case, belief) but *as* this intentional consciousness it is also a *reflecting*; that is, a *consciousness* of the reflection.

The deep dependence that ties the two together means that if we try to grasp the totality (reflection and reflecting) as reflection (belief), we encounter instead the reflect*ing* consciousness (because consciousness is the measure of its being). However, if we try to grasp it as a reflecting consciousness (consciousness (*of*)), we run into the reflection (because consciousness is intentional). Sartre calls this structure the “reflection-reflecting” and asserts that it reveals “not a unity which contains a duality… but a duality which *is* unity, a reflection which *is* its own reflecting.” (p.123) If we try to apprehend the unity first (consciousness (of) belief) we find ourselves “referred immediately to one of the terms” but if we approach it as a duality, “we miss the pre-reflective phenomenon which we wished to study.” (p.123)

Pre-reflective consciousness is self-consciousness and it is here that we must look to understand the *self*. The conscious subject cannot *not be* self because the self must refer back to the subject, however it also cannot *be* self because “the subject without relation to himself would be condensed into the identity of the in-itself” (p.123). This prompts Sartre to claim that the “*self* therefore represents an ideal distance within the immanence of the subject in relation to himself, a way of *not being his own coincidence*, of escaping identity while positing it as unity” (pp.123-124). What this means is that the self is a permanently unstable relation between perfect identity (the self *being* absolute cohesion with itself) and a unity composed of two different aspects (the reflection-reflecting). This is *presence to itself*; “The law of being of the *for-itself*, as the ontological foundation of consciousness, is to be itself in the form of presence to itself” (p.124).

Remembering that we are dealing with a for-itself which is a unity, the only way being can be present to itself is if “an impalpable fissure has slipped into being… it is not wholly itself” (p.124); but when we look to see “*what it is* which separates the subject from himself, we are forced to admit that it is *nothing*” (p.124).

In our example of belief, something must have slipped in between the consciousness (of) belief and belief (or we wouldn’t be consciousness of ourselves as consciousness of belief) but “*nothing* can separate the consciousness (of) belief from belief, since belief is *nothing other* than the consciousness (of) belief. To introduce into the unity of a pre-reflective *cogito* a qualified element external to this *cogito* would be to shatter its unity… there would then be in consciousness something of which it would not be conscious” (p.125). If we attempt to investigate the nature of this separation, it disappears and belief as “pure immanence” (p.125) appears in its place. If we then turn our attention to this belief though, the fissure reappears as we return to the level of the pre-reflective and become consciousness (of) belief once more.

“The being of consciousness qua consciousness is to exist *at a distance from itself* as a presence to itself, and this empty distance which being carries in its being is Nothingness.” (p.125)

Of course, we can never find, or *disclose*, nothingness the same way we find, or disclose, a being; “Nothingness is always an *elsewhere*” (p.126). But it is not an elsewhere that refers us to a being outside of itself, “it is only a perpetual reference of self to self, of the reflection to the reflecting, of the reflecting to the reflection.” (p.126)

Sartre describes this “perpetual act by which the [ideal] in-itself degenerates into presence to itself” an “ontological act” (p.126) as it lies at the very core of existence for consciousness. In addition, he describes nothingness as the “putting into question of being by being – that is, precisely consciousness or for-self” (p.126). Since nothingness can come into being only through being in-itself, we must now turn to investigate the particular being through which it arises, human reality.

II. THE FACTICITY OF THE FOR-SELF

Even though the for-itself is a being which is not what it is and is what it is not, it still *is*. The way it *is* (i.e. the way it exists), is by appearing in a condition it has not chosen. “[I]t *is* in so far as it is thrown into a world and abandoned in a “situation”” (p.127); in short, it *is* as pure contingency, that is, as a being of which we can ask, “Why is this being like this and not like that?”

Sartre notes that Descartes apprehends, through the *reflective cogito*, that the fact that it doubts renders it imperfect and assures it that it is not its own foundation. Descartes uses this as a proof for God but Sartre sees in it proof of our contingency. As beings which possess the idea of perfection within ourselves, we cannot be our own foundation because the very fact that we can conceive of such an idea distances it from us; i.e. we cannot *be* our foundation if we stand in relation to it.

He also claims that Heidegger uses this fact of our contingent “thrownness” as the “first motivation for the passage from the un-authentic to the authentic” (p.128), in effect, as the basis for an ontological ethical project.

Sartre asks the question, since the for-itself is not the foundation of its own being, how can it be the foundation of its own nothingness? He answers this by noting that while “being is indeed the foundation of nothingness as the nihilation of its own being, that is not the same as saying that it is the foundation of its being.” (p.128)

For being to be capable of founding its own being it would have to exist “at a distance from itself” (p.128), which would mean the arising of a nihilation between the being founded and the ‘founding’ being. Such a situation, a “duality which would be unity” (p.128), is exactly the for-itself. In fact, anytime we try to conceive of a being which is the foundation of its own being we simply come back to the for-itself, i.e. “contingent as being-in-itself… [and] the foundation of its own nothingness.” (p.128)

Sartre then looks at Leibniz’s argument for the existence of God which says that the “necessary is a being whose possibility implies its existence” (p.129). Possibility, in this sense, can mean one of two things, neither of which secure the existence of God. First, possibility can refer to knowledge, as in the statement, “It is possible that Pierre is dead”, which indicates merely that I am ignorant regarding Pierre’s current situation. This kind of possibility – which is on the level of knowledge – is always outside of being and can therefore never refer to the “possibility *of* this being.” (p.129) The second sense of possibility “belongs to certain beings as *their* possibility” (p.129) and in this case it is existence which supports possibility, not the other way around. The bottom line? There can be no necessary being; “God, if he exists, is contingent.” (p.129)

So, being (in-itself) is contingent; and what’s more, “being *is* and can only be” (p.130). However, Sartre maintains that there is a “peculiar possibility of being… [that] of being the foundation of itself as consciousness through the sacrificial act which nihilates being.” (p.130) When the in-itself closes on this possibility, it loses itself in order to found consciousness; although Sartre is quick to point out that being-in-itself “can not provide the foundation for anything… it [merely gives] itself the modification of the for-itself.” (p.130)[[12]](#footnote-12)

Sartre’s point here is that “the whole idea of foundation comes into the world through the for-itself” (p.130). Being-in-itself cannot be a foundation because it, as pure being, just *is*. The “absolute event” which Sartre calls the “upsurge of the for-itself” (p.130) is actually the appearance of the *foundation* of the for-itself, which although arising ‘in’ the in-itself can only be considered as lying in the heart of the for-itself. And this “absolute event or for-itself is contingent in its very being.” (p.130)

The totality, “reflected-reflecting” (consciousness), is contingent in-itself at its heart but as we have seen, this totality can never be apprehended, despite existing as a “perpetually evanescent contingency of the in-itself which… haunts the for-itself” (p.131). Sartre calls this perpetual contingency *facticity*, which essentially makes up the ‘brute facts’ of our lives (our bodies, place of birth, hair colour, etc.), and “permits us to say that the for-itself *is*, that it *exists*, although we can never *realize*” it. (p.131)

So the for-itself founds its own being *qua* for-itself although we must admit that it springs into being from an absolute act of the in-itself and this in-itself haunts the for-itself as facticity. This means that the for-itself is its own foundation as for-itself (hence is necessary) even as it hides its contingency in its heart. Sartre blends these contradictions to say the “relation of the for-itself… to facticity can be correctly termed a factual necessity.” (p.132) The for-itself is *both* necessary and contingent. The former is the reason why Descartes apprehended the *cogito* as an “apodictic intuition”; being the foundation of my own being, it is impossible to doubt that I am, but this doesn’t free me from the contingency that lies in my core. Sartre splits the difference by saying that the for-itself is “the foundation of its *consciousness-of-being* or ­*existence*, but on no account can it found its *presence*.” (p.133)

As was the case with our freedom manifesting in the feeling of anguish, the consciousness that manifests the facticity of the for-itself is “the feeling of its complete gratuity; it apprehends itself as being there *for nothing*, as being *de trop*.” (p.132)

In the closing part of this section Sartre comments a little more on the upsurge of the for-itself. The for-itself appears due to the “effort of an in-itself to found itself… an attempt on the part of being to remove contingency from its being” (p.133). However, what it ends up doing is nihilating itself because in order to found itself it must introduce the “*self* or a reflective, nihilating reference into the absolute identity of its being” (p.133) which, as consciousness, is the only being capable of founding itself. And this nihilation sees the in-itself “degenerating into *for-itself*.” (p.133)

III. THE FOR-ITSELF AND THE BEING OF VALUE

Sartre begins this section by noting some problems with his predecessor’s formulations. Descartes’ *cogito* is only an instantaneous perspective. Human reality conceived as the “I think” is trapped in an instant and, as Descartes realised requires an act of continuous creation to pass from one moment to the next. As we have seen, Heidegger doesn’t even address the *cogito*, vaulting into Dasein’s being as care which is the projecting of the self into its possibilities. But Sartre says that without consciousness *my* possibilities cannot exist as *mine*, they simply fall into the unconscious, that is, the in-itself.

Sartre holds that the for-itself determines itself as a *lack of being*, i.e. “it determines its being by means of a being which it is not.” (p.135) The “being which it is not” is, of course, the in-itself. And what’s more, the for-itself must *perpetually* determine itself as this lack.

Next, Sartre wants to investigate this *lack* in more detail. He notes that lack cannot belong “to the nature of the in-itself, which is all positivity. It appears in the world only with the upsurge of human reality.” (p.135) It is only in the human world (consciousness) that lack appears.

The fundamental nature of lack reveals itself as a trinity: “the lacking” which is that which is missing, “the existing” which is what is present, and “the lacked” which is the totality defined as “lacking” + “existing”. Sartre gives the example of a crescent moon. The sliver of moon is the existing, the absent majority is the lacking and the disc of the full moon is the lacked. The point Sartre wants to make here is that in order for any in-itself (the existing) to be grasped as it is, it is necessary that a human reality surpass the in-itself toward a totality (the lacked) which includes that which is currently missing (the lacking). The crescent moon lacks meaning and can’t be apprehended as what it is until we surpass what it is towards what it is not, i.e. that which is currently lacking. “Thus *in the human world*, the incomplete being which is released to intuition as lacking is constituted in its being by the lacked – that is, by what it is not. It is the full moon which confers on the crescent moon its being as crescent; what-is-not determines what-is.” (p.136)

Since “lack can come into being only through lack” (p.136) and since we have seen that lack only exists in the human world, human reality must itself be a lack. The existence of desire will demonstrate this. Desire is by its very nature incomplete; it seeks to surpass itself towards a totality which it currently lacks. As Sartre says, “it must by nature be an escape from itself toward the desired object. In other words, it must be a lack… created by the surpassing which it is not; it must be its own lack of*—*” (p.137).

At this point Sartre describes the totality, the “lacked”, as the ground on which all lack appears. He also states that all lacking is “lacking *to—for—* (p.138) which means *to* some being and *for* the lacked (or totality). This now prompts Sartre to ask what the *for* of human reality is, or what human reality lacks.

The answer to this question is relatively straightforward given all that we have covered thus far. What human reality, as being-for-itself, lacks is the “self-as-being-in-itself… a relation… between the for-itself and itself in the mode of identity.” (p.138) It is only on the ground of this lacked totality that human reality acquires meaning.

This missing in-itself (the lacked) must not be confused with the in-itself of facticity. The latter is the failure of the in-itself to found itself, which resulted in the upsurge of the for-itself and which we have already seen appears in the world (as brute facts we didn’t choose); in other words, is *pure presence*. The former is the lacked totality, the self-as-being-in-itself, and is *pure absence*. It is this second conception of the in-itself that marks a second failure; a failure which lies in the being of the for-itself because it is “the foundation only of itself as nothingness” (p.139), rather than being the foundation of its own being.

This, Sartre notes, is the origin of transcendence. “Human reality is its own surpassing toward what it lacks; it surpasses itself toward the particular being which it would be if it were what it is…. [and] is a perpetual surpassing toward a coincidence with itself which is never given.” (p.139) In connection with this, Sartre approves of Descartes’ analysis of the *cogito* as imperfect and surpassing itself towards perfect being. The only thing is that whereas Descartes thought the being towards which human reality surpasses itself is God, it is in fact “human reality itself as totality.” (p.139)

But there is an important point to note here. The for-itself is not surpassing itself towards a simple in-itself or else it would be attempting to annihilate itself. Rather, this perpetually absent totality which haunts the for-itself is “the impossible synthesis of the for-itself and the in-itself; it would be its own foundation not as nothingness but as being and would preserve within it the necessary translucency of consciousness along with the coincidence with itself of being-in-itself.” (p.140)

Sartre immediately responds to the accusation that he is merely inventing a fictitious being here as a goal (a being-for-itself-in-itself) by saying that we have hypostatised such a being for years, God. God is precisely a being who is what he is (all positivity and the foundation of the world) while at the same time a being who is what he is not and is not what he is as self-consciousness and necessary foundation of himself. The lacked totality of human reality is nothing else than the desire to be God.

This leads Sartre to the conclusion that the being of human reality is suffering because it is forever haunted by a totality it can never attain to. Not just is this goal too difficult to achieve, it is logically impossible “precisely because it could not attain the in-itself without losing itself as for-itself.” (p.140)

Next, Sartre turns his attention to the being of this lacked totality (which is the self) human reality (as unhappy consciousness) surpasses itself towards. He determines that it is non-thetic so there is no explicit consciousness *of* it. It is also not just able to be conceptualised in abstract terms but manifests concretely. To this end, he looks at emotions which he says are “never adequate” because as soon as we have them they are nihilated by the very fact that we are aware of them and thus separated from them.

Sartre takes the example of suffering. We can see “true” suffering when we look at the faces of people who are suffering or, even better in portraits. This is “a suffering which has *being*… [it] overflows the consciousness which we have of it; it is there in the midst of the world, impenetrable and dense, like this tree or this stone; it endures; finally it is what it is.” (p.142) The suffering *I* feel, on the other hand, lacks such existence. I can only *experience* my suffering as a pre-reflective self-consciousness and whenever I try to grasp the suffering itself, “I find only *myself*, myself who moans, myself who wails, myself who in order to realize this suffering which I am must play without respite the drama of suffering.” (p.142) *My* suffering is missing the lacked totality, the *for* of human reality in suffering.

All of the preceding leads Sartre to the insight that the being of the self is value. The reason for this is that the self, we have seen, is at its heart a surpassing towards its own self, a self it can never be, a *for—*, (in short, a “lacked” totality), and “the meaning of being for value is that it is that toward which a being surpasses its being… a being toward*—*” (p.144) (in short, a “lacked” totality). The being of value is therefore nothing other than that at which the self, by its nature, is directed, i.e. a “lacked” totality; hence the being of self is value. Value “is the beyond which surpasses and which provides the foundation for all my surpassings but toward which I can never surpass myself, precisely because my surpassings presuppose it.” (p.144)

It is important to note that at this stage, value is not *known*. To become knowledge, value would have to be posited as an object for consciousness but “[v]alue is merely given with the non-thetic translucency of the for-itself… [and lies] at the heart of the nihilating relation “reflection-reflecting,” (p.146).

IV. THE FOR-ITSELF AND THE BEING OF POSSIBILITIES

Sartre begins this section by stating that the “lacking” and the “existing” (which together make up the totality “lacked”) are of the same nature. Returning to the crescent moon, what the existing crescent lacks is precisely a fragment of the moon. And since we have identified the for-itself as a lack (which lacks coincidence with itself), we can also be sure that what it lacks is the same as it, i.e. the for-itself. And, what’s more, this “lacking for-itself is a for-itself which I *am*… [However] if I were it in the mode of identity, the ensemble would become an in-itself. I am the lacking for-itself in the mode of having to be the for-itself which I am not, in order to identify myself with it in the unity of the self.” (p.147) In other words, the for-itself I lack is a for-itself which is itself *in the mode of being itself* and is therefore an in-itself (a phenomenon, pure being) but if I were to achieve this, I would no longer be a consciousness (a lacking for-itself defined by the negation that lies at its heart), hence it is fundamentally impossible… and yet we never stop yearning for it because it is part of our very being.

Sartre defines the “*peculiar lack* of each for-itself… [as] the possibility of the for-itself.” (p.147) It is important to note that this is not a possibility conceived *after* the initial “upsurge” of the for-itself (which you will remember was the original nihilation of the in-itself that “founded” the for-itself), i.e. a “thematic” notion considered once the for-itself exists, rather it is that very upsurge and “decompression of being [that] causes possibility to arise as one of the aspects of this decompression of being” (p.147). Hence, there can be so such thing as a for-itself that is not “haunted by value and projected toward its own possibles” (p.147).

So, what is possibility? Sartre considers both the positions of Spinoza (who sees possibility as mere ignorance of what is real) and Leibniz (who conceives of possibles as “objects of thought for the divine understanding” (p.148) that exist as long as they are not logically contradictory) and rejects them as failing to be anything more than mere subjective representation predicated on knowledge. For Sartre, if we cast a phenomenological eye towards possibility we will find it doesn’t appear to us as just an “aspect of our ignorance or as a non-contradictory structure belonging to a world not realized” (p.149), rather it appears as something transcendent, something we find “out there” in the world. Sartre uses as an example, the observation, “It is possible that it may rain”. He claims when we say this we don’t mean “without contradiction with the present state of the sky” (p.149) or even that we are ignorant about whether it will rain or not. What we are doing is noting a possibility that “belongs to the sky as a threat; it represents a surpassing on the part of these clouds, which I perceive, toward rain.” (p.149)

However, we would be mistaken to let this carry us to an Aristotelian “potentiality” which exists in things as themselves. “Being-in-itself can not “be potentiality” or “have potentialities.” In-itself it is what it is… the possible comes into the world through human reality” (p.150) when we surpass “existing” aspects of the world towards that which is “lacking”. Just as lack can only come into the world through a being that is its own lack, so possibility can only come into the world through a being that is for itself in its own possibilities.

Sartre is walking a fine line here in holding that possibility is not just subjective (all ‘in our minds’, so to say) while also maintaining that it doesn’t exist in the world of things *as* they are (since a thing in-itself can only be itself and has no ‘room’ in its being for possibility). However, when I (as consciousness) apprehend the in-itself, I surpass it towards something it is lacking (something *possible*), something which therefore requires both the for-itself *and* the in-itself, and which can’t be restricted to either one individually. As Sartre says, possibility can “arise only in the organization into a system… by a being which has a comprehension of possibles. But this comprehension can neither come to it *from without* – i.e., from the in-itself – nor be limited to being only a thought as the subjective mode of consciousness” (p.152).

Returning to possibility as it exists in the for-itself, Sartre restates what he said at the beginning of this section in different terms. We have already seen that the for-itself is a “presence to itself”. What this presence-to-itself lacks must be of the same nature as it, i.e. a presence-to-itself, and it is precisely this lacking presence-to-itself which “constitutes the being of the for-itself as the foundation of its own nothingness.” (p.153) The possible is the absence of this for-itself (which *is not*) that lies in its heart.

For example, thirst is never a thirst in-itself, rather “it is haunted by the presence of the Self of Thirst-itself… [It is therefore] lacking a certain For-itself which would realize it as *satisfied thirst* and which would confer on it being-in-itself. This missing For-itself is the Possible.” (p.153) As a pre-reflective consciousness, thirst seeks to know itself “as thirst at the same time that the drinking satisfies it” (p.154), however the very act of drinking removes that which is lacking from the consciousness (of) thirst and results in the suppression of the thirst when the aim was that the thirst be passed on to the plenitude of being.

Sartre points out another interesting feature here. As we already know, coincidence with the self is impossible, but in this context the reason is different from what we have seen. “The possible of the consciousness of thirst is the consciousness of drinking.” (p.154) The possible for-itself (the for-itself which is lacking) thus attained through drinking “will make itself be as for-itself – that is, with another horizon of possibilities.” (p.154) It is this feature of consciousness which gives rise to the inevitable disappointment that follows the satisfaction of desire.

In closing this section, Sartre defines the “mode of being of the possible… [as] *the something* which the For-itself lacks *in order to* be itself.” (p.155)

V. THE SELF AND THE CIRCUIT OF SELFNESS

Sartre has already detailed[[13]](#footnote-13) how the Ego appears to consciousness as a transcendent thing in-itself and is, in fact, caused by consciousness. It appears to reflective consciousness in order to unify all of our experiences into a unity. This means that the Ego is not of the same nature as consciousness.

However, we ought not to conclude from this that the for-itself is impersonal. Indeed, “consciousness by the pure nihilating movement of reflection makes itself *personal*; for what confers personal existence on a being is not the possession of an Ego – which is only the *sign* of the personality – but it is the fact that the being exists for itself as a presence to itself.” (pp.156-157)

This first reflective movement is what Sartre has called the pre-reflective consciousness and he expands on this here by claiming that it involves “in addition a second or selfness.” (p.157) Selfness is “the second aspect of the person” (p.157), in which “my possible is reflected on my consciousness and determines it as what it is [we have already encountered this as lack]” (p.157). This differs from the “pure presence to itself of the pre-reflective *cogito* – in the sense that the possible which I am is not pure presence to the for-itself as reflection to reflecting, but that it is *absent-presence*” (p.157).

I can only project myself toward this self, apprehended in the form of selfness, through existence in a world and in fact, this is what the world is. Sartre quotes Heidegger here; the world is “that in terms of which human reality makes known to itself what it is” (p.157). *My* possible is a possible for-itself which, to my present consciousness is *non-thetic* (consciousness (of) selfness, or presence to the for-itself as absence) but in relation to the world is a *thetic* consciousness *of* the world. Indeed, “the world by nature is *mine* in so far as it is the correlative in-itself of nothingness” (p.157); the arena haunted by possibles “and the consciousness of each of these is a possible self-consciousness which *I am*; it is these possibles as such which give the world its unity and its meaning as the world.” (p.158)

This “relation of the for-itself with the possible [selfness] which it is [being present as absent]” (p.155) and which can only be realised by venturing out into a world and circling back to itself, Sartre calls the *circuit of selfness*. This all points to an inescapable mutual dependence on which reality is founded; “Without the world there is no selfness, no person; without selfness, without the person, there is no world.” (p.157)

So we have seen that the being of the *cogito* (consciousness) is a for-itself which transcends itself towards value and possibilities. This lifts us out of the “substantial limits of the instantaneity of the Cartesian *cogito*” (p.158); an instantaneity which the for-itself surpasses and transcends towards its possibles. In this case, human reality must be apprehended as temporal and the meaning of its transcendence as temporality. To elucidate this Sartre will first need to consider the Temporal.

**Chapter Two – Temporality**

I. PHENOMENOLOGY OF THE THREE TEMPORAL DIMENSIONS

First of all, Sartre cautions that the “past, present, and future, should not be considered as a collection of “givens” for us to sum up – for example, as an infinite series of “nows” in which some are not yet and others are no longer – but rather as the structured moments of an original synthesis.” (p.159) To fail to do this results in the paradox where none of the three can be said to exist, for the past is no longer, the future is not yet, and the present is the “limit of an infinite division” (p.159) which means it doesn’t exist. We must approach temporality as a totality upon which each dimension appears.

A. The Past

The question to be considered in this section is “what is *the being* of a past being?” (p.160) Sartre rejects two common opinions. The first is that the past is no longer and only the present is real. He rejects this because it doesn’t allow us to explain how “a consciousness which remembers transcends the present in order to aim at the event back there where it was”. (p.160) In addition, this view can’t explain how we distinguish between a memory and current perception or even an imagined image.

The second opinion, which Sartre attributes to Henri Bergson, gives the past “a kind of honorary existence” in which being past means “losing its efficacy without losing its being.” (p.161) This approach fails to explain how the past can nevertheless exist *for us*, being “reborn” to haunt us.

The flaw which both of the above succumbs to is that they isolate the past from the present. Sartre will maintain and show that the past is “bound to a certain present and to a certain future, to both of which it belongs” (p.163) as *mine*, meaning that it exists as “the function of a certain being which I *am*.” (p.163) Sartre will claim that the past arises only for human consciousness and always “*is* in the sense that at present it *is* the past of” (p.165) someone or some current situation. “There is not first a universal past which would later be particularized in concrete pasts. On the contrary, it is *particular pasts* which we discover first.” (p.165)

Taking the example of Paul, who in 1920 was a student at the Polytechnic School, Sartre maintains that the only tense of the verb “to be” we can use to describe this situation is the present; “In so far as he was, we must say of him – “He is.” If it is a Paul now become past who was a student at the Polytechnic School, all connection with the present is broken: the man who sustained that qualification, the subject, has remained back there with his attribute in 1920.” (pp.163-164) To establish this connection, we must ensure that my past of yesterday exists “as a transcendence behind my present of today” (p.164).

So, we have seen that the past only exists *for* someone or something which means that there are beings which “have” pasts. However, this “have” cannot be used in the same sense as when we say, “I have a car”; indeed, “the past can not be possessed by a present being which remains strictly external to it” (p.166). Rather, it can only be possessed by a being for whom its present *is* its past. This means that “an in-itself, whose presence is what it is, can not “have” a past.” (p.166) Because of this, we ought to replace the expression “to have a past” (which supposes a mode of possession applicable to matter) with “to be its own past”.

In addition, a past exists “only for a present which can not exist without being its past – back there, behind itself… only those beings have a past which are such that in their being, their past being is in question, those beings who *have to be* their past.” (p.167) This means that the past only exists for human reality because only human reality *has to be what it is*.

Sartre now enquires as to the meaning of the word “was”. Taking the example, “Paul *was* fatigued,” reveals that what this means is “the present Paul is actually responsible for having had this fatigue in the past... [he is] sustaining this fatigue with his being.” (p.168) If he wasn’t, the fatigue would have been *lost*. What this means is that the “present being therefore is the foundation of its own past” (p.168) but not in a mode of indifference, rather the present sustains the past while also being “profoundly modified by it… [so] “[w]as” means that the present being has to be in its being the foundation of its past while *being* itself this past.” (p.168)

So, here is the link between the present and the past Sartre was searching for. The “was” is an ontological leap from the present into the past that synthesises these two temporal modes.

*I am my past*

In the first place, as we have seen, “was” is a mode of being, meaning that I *am* my past, I do not *have* it. A comment about something we did yesterday would not affect me at all if I was completely dissociated from my past.

This also means that I am responsible for my past. This is what allows me to maintain a grudge against a person; “I reproach him for his past not only in so far as he *is it* but in so far as he reassumes it at each instant and sustains it is being, in so far as he is *responsible* for it.” (p.169)

Sartre is quick to note here that this does not mean I *give* being to my past. “It is not because I “represent” my past that it exists. But it is because I *am* my past that it enters into the world” (p.170). Sartre does not wish to slip into idealism. The past is not a consequence of knowledge, rather it is a consequence of *being*.

The past is also “that which is without possibility of any sort; it is that which has consumed its possibilities… I assume the total responsibility for it as if I could change it, and yet I can not be anything other than it.” (p.170) This means that “the past which I *was* is what it is; it is an in-itself like the things in the world.” (p.170)

*I am not my past*

On the other hand, the nature of the “was” also means that I *am* not my past precisely because I *was* it. One might imagine this to be the case because the very moment I make a statement about myself, that self has already receded into the past and I am now something else. However, Sartre rejects this for the same reason he rejects the Eleatic ‘proof’ that motion is impossible. If we can say of an arrow in mid-flight that it *is* at point A, then B, etc., then motion is illusory and merely made up of a succession of points at rest. Similarly, if I think that I am no longer what I was because I have changed, then I have slipped into the error of “constituting the “me” out of a series of fixed states which succeed each other” (p.171).

I am not my past, not because I have already changed but because the nature of the self is that, at its heart, it is always separated from itself by a *nothing*; or in Sartre’s words, “if I am not what I was, it is not because I have already changed… but because I am related to my being in the mode of an internal bond of non-being.” (p.172)

This duality of non-being and being which the for-itself is allows Sartre to quip that regarding the past, “*I have to be it in order not to be it* and *I have not to be it in order to be it*.” (p.172) Taking each half of that confusing statement separately:

* *Having to be* my past is the only way that I can be my past in the mode of not being it; that is to say, it is the only way I can be my past in the mode of “was”; i.e. without being my past in the mode of the in-itself.
* But by the same token, I *am* my past (I sustain it in my being and cannot exist without being my past) but in order to be my past like this (as a for-itself) I must also *not be* my past (or I would be my past in the mode of the in-itself)

Now, Sartre re-affirms that I am my past in the mode of “was” which means that “in the past… I am what I am” (p.172), that is, an in-itself. However, this in-itself, this “heavy plenitude of being is behind me” (p.172) and therefore out of reach.

This finally brings us to the meaning of the “was”; “the past is precisely and *only* that ontological structure which obliges me to be what I am *from behind*… [it] is the in-itself which I am, but I am this in-itself as *surpassed*.” (pp.172-173) Why? Because the very affirmation that I *am* my past in the mode of the in-itself, distances me from it by becoming (pre-reflective) consciousness (of) my past.

In the original upsurge of the for-itself (which occurred when the in-itself nihilated itself in order to found itself, you will remember) the in-itself “lives on and haunts the for-itself as its original contingency.” (p.173) This we called *facticity* and it turns out that “it is also the past. “Facticity” and “Past” are two words to indicate one and the same thing. The Past, in fact, like Facticity, is the invulnerable contingency of the in-itself which I have to be, without any possibility of not being it.” (p.173)

We have typically imagined that the past and the present are homogenous since “the shame which I experienced yesterday was part of the for-itself when I experienced it… [hence I] believe then that it has remained for-itself today” (p.174). Consequently, when I find that I cannot re-enter my past, I therefore assume this to be the case because it no longer exists when in fact the reason is that the past is in-itself and I am for-itself.

Sartre does add here that the shame I experienced yesterday, in “its essence can still be described as for-itself… [b]ut its being *is no longer* for itself since it no longer exists as reflection-reflecting… The past is given as a for-itself *become* in-itself.” (p.174)

Finally, Sartre notes that since the past “represents a certain synthesis of the being which is what it is not and is not what it is [the for-itself] – with the being which is what it is [the in-itself]” (p.174), it resembles value. However it *isn’t* value because value is always in light of my future possibilities as a “being toward–” in which “the for-itself becomes itself by surpassing and by founding its being” (p.175), whereas the past is the complete opposite of this. It is at the start, an in-itself, “the contingent and unalterable fact which I was.” (p.175)

Sartre summarises this section nicely thus; “the Past is a For-itself reapprehended and inundated by the In-itself.” (p.175) However, how does this happen? Why does a concrete event of the For-itself *become* past? To answer that, Sartre tells us we must first understand the present.

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In this section Sartre makes an interesting comment about death but rather than interrupt the flow, I decided to make a note of it here.

We have seen that the past is an in-itself but what this means is that “the past is the ever growing totality of the in-itself which we are.” (p.169) And this, in turn, means that at our deaths, we will be completely in-itself. “Death reunites us with ourselves… At the moment of death we *are*” (p.169).

If we think back to the grudge example Sartre gave earlier, we would happily agree that once a man dies, the grudge we held against him also ceases. Sartre points out that this is because “he has been reunited with his past; he *is it* without, however, being responsible for it.” (p.169)

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B. The Present

The present is for-itself. Sartre asks what the fundamental meaning of the present is. Since the “present is distinguished from all other existence by the characteristic of *presence*” the “meaning of *present* is presence to—” (p.176). This leads Sartre to ask two more questions; to *what* is presence and exactly *who* or *what* is present?

Sartre tells us that presence is presence to “this table, to this room, to Paris, to the world, in short to being-in-itself.” (p.176) In answer to the second question, Sartre asserts that only for-itself can be present to—. One might think that the in-itself could also be “present *to me* and to the being-in-itself which it is not” (p.176) but Sartre rejects this because presence to— is an “ontological relation of synthesis” (p.176) which means that it is an internal relation between a present being and the being to which it is present and requires that “I am there in the being of the chair as *not being* the chair. A being which is present to— can not be at rest “in-itself”” (p.176). So, the present is the presence of the for-itself to being-in-itself.

In addition, Sartre maintains that the for-itself is not just presence to this or that in-itself but to “all of being-in-itself” (p.177). This means that “the presence of the For-itself is what makes being-in-itself exist as a totality.” (p.177) The facticity of the for-itself means that it is *there* rather than somewhere else but “being *there* is not the same as being *present*. *Being there* determines only the perspective by which presence to the totality of the in-itself is realized.” (p.177)

As we have seen elsewhere, “the For-itself is the being by which the present enters into the world” (p.177) and it is therefore only because of the for-itself that “[b]eings are revealed as co-present [i.e. present to each other as this chair is present to that table]” (p.177) or as Sartre also says, the in-itself can be present to each other only because they exist “in a world which human reality haunts as a presence” (p.177).

Sartre now asks what *presence* is. As we have seen, presence implies an internal bond with a being but “this internal bond is a negative bond and denies… that one is the being to which one is present” (p.178) otherwise the bond would dissolve into the pure being of the in-itself. So we can see that a nothingness has once more slipped into the equation, “presence to being is the presence of the For-itself in so far as the For-itself is not… This can be expressed briefly by saying that the Present *is not*.” (p.178)

What does this “non-being of the Present and of the For-itself” (p.178) mean? Sartre now embarks on a brief summary of the being of the for-itself which it will heed us to follow:

The For-itself does not have being because its being is always at a distance: its being is there in the reflecting, if you consider appearance, which is appearance or reflection only *for* the reflecting; it is there in the reflection if you consider the reflecting, which is no longer in itself anything more than a pure function of reflecting *this* reflection.

This summarises the whole reflecting/reflection dyad that we have seen lies at the core of being-for-itself; the “structure at the basis of intentionality and of selfness is the negation, which is the *internal* relation of the For-itself to the thing.” (p.178)

In exactly the same way, the for-itself is present to being first and foremost as a negation, a recognition that “I am not this”. Sartre expresses this by saying, “[t]he For-itself is present to being in the form of flight; the Present is a perpetual flight in the face of being… the fundamental meaning of the Present… [is that it] *is not*.” (p.179)

In light of this Sartre remarks that “[i]t is impossible to grasp the Present in the form of an instant, for the instant would be the moment when the present *is*. But the present is not; it makes itself present in the form of flight.” (p.179)

This flight of the for-itself has two “directions”; behind (where it *was* its past) and before (where it *will be* its future). “It is a flight outside of co-present being and from the being which it was toward the being which it will be. At present it is not what it is (past) and it is what it is not (future).” (p.179)

C. The Future

First, Sartre points out that the in-itself cannot contain any part of the future. The future only comes into the world through human reality. As we saw with the past, “[i]f the future is pre-outlined on the horizon of the world, this can be only by a being which *is* its own future; that is, which is to-come for itself, whose being is constituted by a coming-to-itself of its own being… [and] [o]nly a being which has to be its being instead of simply being it can have a future.” (p.180)

Once more, we must ask what “being its future” means and inquire into the type of being of the future. Sartre immediately rejects the idea that the future is a representation. When it is “thematized” in this way it is reduced to an object for a thinking subject and “ceases to be *my* future” (p.180). In addition, if the future was represented, it would no longer be the future; it would have become the present.

He considers the opinion that the present representation might have a “futurizing” intention. Ultimately this doesn’t make sense because if such an intention existed, either it would itself be present, hence useless in explaining the future, or it would transcend the present in the future which is what we are trying to understand in the first place. “Moreover, if the For-itself were limited within its present, how could it represent the future to itself?” (pp.180-181)

The future comes into the world because the for-itself is “the being which makes itself exist as having its being outside itself in the future.” (p.181) Sartre considers the example of a tennis player. Every position I take on the court “has meaning only through the movement which I shall make immediately afterward” (p.181) but I don’t move into these positions by conceiving of a representation of the future, rather the future motion, “without even being thematically posited, hovers in the background of the positions which I adopt” (p.181) clarifying, linking and modifying them.

Every single moment and action is internally linked to a future and provides the meaning for them, “always at a distance, down there, outside.” (p.181)

Crucially, Sartre wants to avoid imagining the future as a “now” which is not yet, as that would yield an in-itself or even worse “time as a given and static container. The future is *what I have to be* in so far as I can not be it.” (p.182)

We have seen that the “For-itself makes itself present before being as not being this being and as having been its own being in the past” (p.182) through a presence which is flight. Flight is a fleeing of the being which it was, towards the “self which it will be by coincidence with what it lacks [its *possible*]. The Future is the lack which wrenches it as lack away from” (p.182) a present which it is not and a past which it cannot not be.

Sartre holds that “everything which the For-itself is beyond being is the Future” (p.183). In this context, Sartre is using the phrase “beyond being” to mean that the future which the for-itself projects itself towards is “not yet”, that is, it is a nothingness. Sartre then asks what is the meaning of this “beyond”?

To understand this, Sartre first points out that “the Future has one essential characteristic of the For-itself: it is presence (future) to being. And it is Presence of this particular For-itself, of the For-itself for which it is the future. When I say, “I shall be happy,” it is this present For-itself which will be happy…” (p.183) So this future world, a world which, as nothingness, is “beyond being”, is a world that “has meaning as future only in so far as I am present to it as *another* who I *will be*, in another position, physical, emotional, social, *etc*.” (p.183)

So the “Future is not solely the presence of the For-itself to a being situated beyond being. It is something which waits for the For-itself which I am. This something is myself.” (p.184) In other words, my future for-itself is clearly not *different* from my current for-itself, for “[w]hen I say that *I* will be happy, we understand that it is the present “I,” dragging its Past after it, who will be happy. Thus the Future is “I” in as much as I await myself as presence to a being beyond being. I project myself toward the Future in order to merge there with that which I lack; that is, with that which if synthetically added to my Present would make me be what I am. Thus what the For-itself has to be as presence to being beyond being is its own possibility.” (p.184)

What’s more, in the same way that we have seen that the possible is a project aiming at becoming an in-itself, the “project of the For-itself toward the future which it *is* is a project toward the In-itself.” (p.185) “The Future is the ideal point where the sudden infinite compression of facticity (Past), of the For-itself (Present), and of its possible (a particular Future) will at last cause the *Self* to arise as the existence in-itself of the For-itself.” (pp.184-185)

Of course, the for-itself will never realise this goal, “it must be “an always future hollow… The entire future of the present For-itself falls into the Past as the future along with this For-itself itself. It will be the past future of a particular For-itself or a former future.” (p.185) This is the same as saying that the future we attain is never the “future toward which I projected myself beyond being… [because] I was projecting myself toward the future qua future” and of course, by the time I get there, it is “revealed as the foundation of its own nothingness and once again as the lack of a new future.” (p.185)

So, this “Future which I have to be is simply my *possibility* of presence to being beyond being… [It] constitutes the meaning of my present For-itself, as the project of its possibility, but that in no way predetermines my For-itself which is to-come, since the For-itself is always abandoned to the nihilating obligation of being the foundation of its nothingness.” (pp.185-186)

The future cannot be predetermined because, you will remember that, I am my future in the mode of not being it; “I am a being whose meaning is always problematic… The For-itself can never be its Future except problematically, for it is separated from it by a Nothingness which it is.” (p.186) This nothingness arises because to be consciousness *of* my future is to be distanced from it, to *not be* it. In other words, I nihilate myself as being perfectly identified with my future breaking any causal connection that might have existed between myself and it.

It is in this sense that I am free and here where Sartre observes that, “To be free is to be condemned to be free.” (p.186) The “Future quaFuture does not have to be. It is not *in itself*, and neither is it in the mode of being of the For-itself since it is the *meaning* of the For-itself. The Future is not, it *is possibilized*.” (p.186)

Sartre closes this section with a definition of the being of the future; “The Future is the continual possibilization of possibles – as the meaning of the present For-itself in so far as this meaning is problematic and as such radically escapes the present For-itself.” (p.186)

II. THE ONTOLOGY OF TEMPORALITY

Sartre now proposes to discuss temporality as a total structure within which the above three secondary ekstatic structures of past, present and future operate. He will approach this subject from two different points of view from which temporality can be understood.

A. Static Temporality

The static aspect will consider temporality in terms of *before* and *after* since these reflect an ordering principle behind succession that is independent of change.

This order “before-after” presents temporality as irreversible and a series in which the terms are “revealed *one at a time*” (p.188). This has prompted people to “see in the *before* and the *after* forms of separation” (p.188). Sartre admits that time does indeed separate me from various aspects of my temporality. This is why I have to wait to realise my desires and why time heals all wounds. However such a view of the world dissolves temporality into “a crumbling of befores and afters. The unity of this crumbling, the temporal atom, will be the *instant*” (p.188).

There are two problems with this. The first is that the *instant* is “indivisible and **non-temporal** since temporality is succession” [boldface added] (p.188). Secondly, since each instant stands alone, independent of any other instant (either before or after), there is no way to explain “*how* there can be a passage from one instant to another instant” (p.189).

In short, this approach makes of time a series of “now-in-itselfs”, complete, whole and separate; some of which are past, some future and one present. Sartre asserts that a coherent account of temporality cannot turn on separation because any event B (before) existing prior to an event C (after) presupposes in its very being (by virtue of being “before”) some connection to the posterior event C. Not only that, it also presupposes a connection to a prior event A. “If then, time is separation, it is at least a separation of a special type – a division which reunites.” (p.189) Ultimately, Sartre wants to explain temporality in a way that preserves this irreversible separation of the “before-after” order while wrapping it all up in a unity.

One can solve this problem by invoking a witness to establish the relation before-after. The problem is that such a witness must himself be temporal thereby raising the whole problem again. And in any case, this still leaves us with the problem of how a temporal being can impose temporality upon non-temporal instants.

Descartes and Kant went another route, creating non-temporal witnesses to do the job; “Since the unity of time can not be furnished by time itself, both philosophers put an extra-temporal being in charge of it: God and his continuous creation with Descartes, the “I think” (*Ich denke*) and its forms of synthetic unity with Kant.” (p.191) The insurmountable problem with doing this is that a non-temporal being is even less able to unite non-temporal instants into a totality of succession.

In either case, starting with non-temporal instants can never get us to temporality meaning that “time will become a pure human illusion, a dream.” (p.191)

Descartes and Kant tried to understand temporality as the multiplicity of before-after, i.e. a series of *instants*; however Leibniz and Bergson, on the other hand, came at the problem from the other end, eschewing the instant and casting temporality as *continuity* and *duration*, respectively. The problem with this approach is that, in perfect opposition to Descartes and Kant, it fails to explain temporality as multiplicity.

Sartre argues that we must think of temporality as both unity *and* multiplicity; holding that it is more of a “quasi-multiplicity, a foreshadowing of dissociation in the heart of unity.” (p.194) Therefore, we must consider them both together; “[i]f we first posit temporal unity, we risk no longer being able to understand anything about irreversible succession as the *meaning* of this unity, and if we consider the disintegrating succession as the original character of time, we risk no longer being able to understand that there is *one* time.” (p.194)

So, since we have seen that temporality cannot come about through any kind of external relation and “there is no priority of unity over multiplicity, nor of multiplicity over unity, it is necessary to conceive of temporality as a unity which multiplies *itself*; that is, temporality can be only a relation of being at the heart of this same being.” (p.194) Therefore temporality cannot be a “container whose being would be *given*” (p.195) because then it would be impossible to understand how it can appear as multiplicity while being unity at the same time. This means that, “[t]emporality *is not*. Only a being of a certain structure of being can be temporal in the unity of its being. The before and after are intelligible… only as an internal relation. It is there in the after that the before causes itself to be determined as before and conversely. In short the before is intelligible only if it is the being which is *before* itself” (p.195), and this means that temporality must have the structure of selfness, i.e. of a “being which is itself outside itself.” (p.195) In the for-itself we have encountered just such a being; “Temporality is the being of the For-itself in so far as the For-itself has to be its being ekstatically. Temporality is not, but the For-itself temporalizes itself by existing.” (p.195)

The For-itself, just by existing, “causes all the possible dimensions of its nihilation to exist” (p.195). Sartre terms this mode of being of the For-itself, *diasporatic*. This mode of being founds not just the quasi-multiplicity of time but is the ground by which all multiplicity comes into the world; “It is through human reality that multiplicity comes into the world; it is the quasi-multiplicity at the heart of being-for-itself which causes number to be revealed in the world.” (p.196)

Next Sartre references three nihilating dimensions (or aspects) of the For-itself, all of which it must be at the same time: “(1) to not-be what it is, (2) to be what it is not, (3) to be what it is not and to not-be what it is – within the unity of a perpetual referring.” (p.196) These three ekstases relate directly to the past, present, and future.

The first dimension is where “the For-itself has to be its being, behind itself, as that which it is without being the foundation of it.” (pp.196-197) The For-itself *is*, in the sense that it is the foundation of its own nothingness, but at the same time it *is not* because if it was its past it would cease to be consciousness and instead be in-itself. In this sense its past is contingent and without reason; “[w]hat it is is behind it as the perpetual *surpassed*.” (p.197) This surpassed facticity is precisely what we call the Past, which is “a necessary structure of the For-itself” (p.197).

The fact that the Past is a necessary structure of the For-itself carries an unexpected consequence with it. Since every For-itself “can exist only as a nihilating surpassing, and this surpassing implies something surpassed” (p.197), it is impossible that the For-itself arises “in the world in the absolute newness of being without a past and that it then gradually constitutes a past for itself.” (p.197) In other words, “it comes into the world *with* a Past.” (p.197)

We have already determined that the upsurge of the For-itself takes place within the In-itself. The In-itself is prior; “it is as the nihilation of the In-itself that the For-itself arises in the world… The In-itself is what the For-itself was *before*” (p.198) and since “it is because the For-itself has risen in the world, and it is from the standpoint of the For-itself that the past can be established” (p.199), as soon as it arises it finds itself complete with a Past, which we have already identified as facticity.

The world prior to the For-itself lacks temporality because the In-itself is absolute being, complete plenitude, but as soon as the For-itself “arises”, this prior In-itself which it *was*, becomes its Past, the Past it has to be in the mode of not being it, i.e. facticity.

Sartre dodges the “*metaphysical* questions concerning the In-itself from which the For-itself was born, questions such as: “How was there an In-itself *before* the birth of the For-itself? How was the For-itself born from *this* In-itself rather than from another?” *Etc.*” (pp.198-199) and I think he probably sees them as fundamentally unanswerable or even meaningless because without a For-itself to bring temporality and unity to the world the questions just don’t refer to anything.

Sartre adds that the Past “as the unalterable being which I have to be without any possibility of not being it does not enter into the unity “reflection-reflecting” of the *Erlebnis*; it is outside” (p.199). This means that, precisely because the Past is in one sense, contingent and gratuitous, a brute in-itself that we can only accept, it is not a part of that core “reflection-reflecting” self-consciousness that the For-itself is. However, “neither does it exist as that *of which* there is consciousness… there can not be a *thesis* of the Past, for one can posit only what one is not.” (pp.199-200) The central idea here is that while I can take any other in-itself, say a chair, and make it the object pole to my observing consciousness (which is the subject pole) I can’t do this with my Past because I *am* my Past; “The For-itself acknowledges itself as *being* the Past and is separated from it only by its nature as For-itself, which can be nothing.” (p.200) In short, while the Past is external to the For-itself, it is not external in the way other In-itselfs are; “it is “a thing which one *is* without positing it, as that which haunts without being observed, is behind the For-itself” (p.200).

Of course, I *can* make the past an object for me, but when I do this I explicitly distance myself from it and render myself as *not being* this Past which I am positing; “The Past is no longer *behind*; it does not cease being past, but I myself cease *to be* the Past.” (p.200) In my primary mode (as pre-reflective consciousness) I was my Past without knowing it (this is not a relation of knowledge); but in the secondary mode (as reflective consciousness) I know it but no longer *was* it.

How can one be conscious of one’s Past if not in the thetic mode? In the way the Past lurks behind every movement and action, how it confers meaning on every perception; “it is that constantly given density of the world which allows me to orient myself and to get my bearings.” (p.201)

The second dimension is where “the For-itself apprehends itself as a certain lack. It *is* this lack and it is also the *lacking*, for it has to be what it is.” (p.201) This is, of course, the Future which we have analysed already “as an unachieved totality which can not be achieved.” (p.201)

Finally, in the third dimension, where “the For-itself, dispersed in the perpetual game of reflected-reflecting, escapes itself in the unity of one and the same flight” we encounter the Present, as presence to being.

The point of the preceding is that through each of these nihilations of being, or temporal directions (which is the same thing), the For-itself is elsewhere; regarding the Past, before itself; the Future, behind itself, and the Present, fleeing itself in the reflection-reflecting. It is never *itself*.

This all culminates in Sartre’s final pronouncement here that Temporality is not a “universal time” or a law imposed on being from without; rather “it is the intra-structure of the being which is its own nihilation – that is, the *mode of being* peculiar to being-for-itself. The For-itself is the being which has to be its being in the disaporatic form of Temporality.” (p.202) So, in the final analysis Temporality is a mode of being of the For-itself.

B. The Dynamic of Temporality

However, this tells us nothing about *duration*, “the fact that a particular after *becomes* a before, that the Present *becomes* past and the future a former-future.” (p.187)

Sartre first challenges Kant and Leibniz’s conception that “change by itself implies permanence” (p.203) which both views the human being as an in-itself and reduces temporality to the measure of change. He points to three problems with this: (1) “the subsistence of a permanent element *apart from* something which changes” (p.203) can only become change in the eyes of a witness united with both; (2) postulating a permanent element as the foundation of change doesn’t help when an entire thing changes; and (3) even without change, “the very existence of the consciousness would imply temporality since it would have to be without change what it is in the form of “having been it.” (p.204)

Dropping the idea of “a permanence to cascade from instant to instant… [Sartre says] The real question is the necessity for being, whatever it may be, to metamorphose itself completely at once – form and content, to sink into the past and to thrust itself forward at the same time *ex nihilo* toward the future.” (pp.204-205)

There are two questions here but Sartre sees them as part of the same phenomenon; “The Present could not *pass* except by becoming the *before* of a For-itself which constitutes itself as the *after* of that Present.” (p.205) Within the upsurge of a new Present, this Present naturally becomes Past; “temporal becoming is a global modification since a Past which would be the Past *of* nothing would no longer be a Past and since a Present must be necessarily the Present *of* this Past.” (p.205)

This “dynamic” metamorphosis doesn’t just affect the Present, it also affects the Past and the Future. Sartre considers the Past first. He notes that “the Past of the Present which has undergone the modification of Pastness, becomes the Past of a Past – or a Pluperfect.” (p. 205) This may seem confusing but consider the temporal sequence A 🡪 B, such that B is the Present, A is the Past and in Sartre’s terms, B is the Present of the Past (A). Now when the metamorphosis B 🡪 C occurs, C becomes the new Present, B the new Past (C is the Present of the Past (B)), but what happens to A? A, the former Past, now becomes the Past of the Past (B), or a “Pluperfect”.

Sartre points to two consequences of this. First, the Present is now no longer different (heterogeneous) from the Past (since B (Present) has become Past) and second, the Present is “no longer its Past in the form of having to be it but in the mode of having had to be it” (p. 205) (since A has gone from Past to Pluperfect). He also points out that the “connection between Past and Pluperfect is a connection which is in the mode of the In-itself, and it appears on the foundation of the present For-itself.” (p. 205)

The metamorphosis doesn’t affect the Future in the same way however; the Future remains the Future but it “can enter into two kinds of relations with the new Present according to whether we are dealing with the immediate Future or the far Future.” (p. 205) In the case of an immediate Future, the new Present becomes the former Future while at the same time realising itself as For-itself, that is, as no longer being the Future that it was, hence being an unrealised Future. This is what prompts the feeling of dissatisfaction when the Future eventually comes to us, by that time it is no longer Future, but a *former* Future, now become For-itself. In this case “it is affected with the quality of *ideality*; but this ideality is ideality *in-itself*, for it presents itself as a *given* lack of a *given* past and not as the lacking which a present For-itself has to be in the mode of *not being*.” (p. 206) This former Future is *ideal* because it is not realised *as* Future, rather, when it is realised it has already become the lack (future) of a *past* For-itself, which commits it to the realm of the in-itself.

With regard to a far Future “it remains future in relation to the new Present; but if the Present does not constitute itself as the lack of *this* Future, then this Future loses its character as possibility… it no longer possibilizes itself but qua possible it receives being-in-itself. It becomes a *given* Possible… it remains the thematized object of my contemplation and has become the always future Possible *which I have been*.” (p. 206)

We haven’t yet investigated the “metamorphosis of the present For-itself into the Past with the accompanying upsurge of a new Present” (p. 206), in other words, we haven’t yet looked at “the being of the for-itself as that spontaneous total change into a new present from a previous present that becomes a past.” (Catalano, 1974, p.124) Sartre cautions once again that the past is not annihilated or confined to memory. Rather, what we should understand by the “making-past of the ex-present is a passage to the in-itself while the appearance of a new present is the nihilation *of* that in-itself.” (p.207)

Taking each of these movements in turn, “the Past is a For-itself which has ceased to be a transcending presence to the In-itself. Now become an in-itself, it has fallen *into the midst of the world*. What I have to be I am as a presence to the world which I am not but which I *was*… the past presence to a past state of the world” (p.207). “I am angry, melancholy, I have an Oedipus complex or an inferiority complex for always, but in the past in the form of the “was” in the midst of the world” (p.208).

The meaning of the upsurge (the new present) is not the appearance of a new being; rather it is “the appearance of a For-itself which nihilates itself as Presence to the world” (p.208). This new Present For-itself is a “perpetual flight away from the snare of the “in-itself”” (p.208) until death claims victory as “the final arrest of Temporality by the making-past of the whole system.” (p.208)

This flight, towards the future away from the present as the past that it has to be “is a flight of a *diasporatic* or ekstatic being, *spreading* itself simultaneously to the three temporal dimensions.” (Catalano, 1974, pp.124-125) Sartre calls this the *diaspora* and defines it as the way “we must always look for the meaning of a temporal dimension *elsewhere*, in another dimension.” (p.276)

So, after all of this Sartre asserts that the dynamic nature of Temporality is not “a contingent quality which is added to the being of the for-itself… **it is an essential structure of the For-itself** conceived as the being which has to be its own nothingness.” [boldface added] (p.208)

In actuality there is no problem here; there is nothing to be explained. Change is only a problem if we persist in thinking of human reality in terms of the in-itself. When we accept that the being of human beings is for-itself however, this very being necessarily includes Temporality within its structure. In fact, permanence becomes a problem that needs explaining – if indeed permanence exists.

In fact, “change belongs naturally to the for-itself inasmuch as this for-itself is spontaneity.” (p.209) The next page in *Being and Nothingness* is a difficult one but I think the gist of it is that spontaneity is precisely this flight from the in-itself that the for-itself enacts through Temporality. It is so because “spontaneity can not be without temporalizing itself.” (p.210) And the nature of spontaneity is to “escape from itself and… escape from that very escape” (p.210), in other words, to continually flee the in-itself which threatens it from all sides.

After this unexpected talk of “spontaneity”, Sartre tells us that he thought this concept would be more familiar to his readers and now proceeds to explain the same idea using his own terminology. A for-itself which did not carry out the metamorphosis we have been contemplating here would remain a “negation of the transcendent in-itself and a nihilation of its own being in the form of “reflection-reflecting.”” (p.210) However, if it did this **without enduring**, it would become a *given* (a contingent in-itself), i.e. “it would cease to be the foundation of its own nothingness; it would no longer be as having to be, but in the nihilating unity of the dyad reflection-reflecting, it *would* be.” (p.211)

What Sartre means here is that the metamorphosis (which Sartre also calls *change* or *enduring*) is a flight from Being (in-itself), so this flight is what we have been trying to understand here, i.e. the change of the Present for-itself into a Past and the upsurge of a new Present. But this very act of enduring is the same as the upsurge of the for-itself by which the for-itself came to be, which we have seen causes the for-itself to be the necessary foundation of its own nothingness. Hence, if the for-itself didn’t endure, it would no longer be the foundation of its own nothingness and would simply become contingent in-itself.

Everything we have said above with regard to the for-itself naturally applies to the totality of temporalisation as well. “The totality never *is* achieved; it is a totality which is refused and which flees from itself. It is the wrenching away from self within the unity of a single upsurge” (p.211) and this is possible because, as we have seen, temporality is a structure of the for-itself.

III. ORIGINAL TEMPORALITY AND PSYCHIC TEMPORALITY: REFLECTION

In this section Sartre will explore the relation between original temporality, which manifests in the pre-reflective consciousness of enduring, and “psychic temporality”, which appears as a positional, reflective consciousness *of* enduring in which I become thetically aware of myself as enduring. Temporality as we are thetically aware of it in the form of psychic duration only arises through reflection and all the processes that accompany psychic duration (states, qualities and acts) appear in the reflected-on, the ‘content’ of the reflection.

So, clearly we are going to be concerned with reflection here which raises an immediate problem for Sartre; “how is reflection possible for a being which can be only in the past?” (p.212) In asking this question Sartre rejects reflection as viewed by Descartes and Husserl since both saw it as a “privileged intuition… [which] apprehends consciousness in an act of present and instantaneous immanence.” (p.212)

So what is reflection? “Reflection is the for-itself conscious *of* itself.” (p.212) Since the for-itself is already a non-thetic self-consciousness, we normally think of reflection as a new consciousness focused on the “consciousness reflected-on”. Sartre sees two problems with this. First, “it is difficult to explain the upsurge *ex nihilo* of the reflective consciousness” and “it is completely impossible… to account for its absolute unity with the consciousness reflected-on” (p.212) and this unity is essential if reflection is to guarantee certainty of the reflective intuition.

Once more, Sartre eschews both idealism and realism. Idealism is insufficient because the being of the reflected-on does not need to be perceived in order to exist. Realism fails because it assumes two completely isolated independents which we will then never be able to bring together again; “If *first* we conceive of reflection as an autonomous consciousness, we shall *never* be able to reunite it later with the consciousness reflected-on” (p.213). This doesn’t work for Sartre because he conceives of reflection as a connection of the for-itself with itself which means the two (reflection and reflected-on) can’t be separate. In light of this, Sartre concludes that “reflection must be united to that which is reflected-on by a bond of being, that the reflective consciousness must be the consciousness reflected-on.” (p.213)

This presents a problem. Since the bond between the two is one of being (the reflecting consciousness is the same as the consciousness reflected-on) reflection yields apodictic (certain) evidence but “to the extent that reflection is *knowledge*, the reflected-on must necessarily be the *object* for the reflective; and this implies a separation of being” (p.213), i.e. the reflecting consciousness and the reflected-on cannot be the same. So the reflective must both be and not be the reflected-on.

Sartre points out that we have already seen this ontological structure in the heart of the for-itself in the form of the reflection-reflecting (which we analysed as consciousness (of) belief), however there it was quite different. In the for-itself the two terms were united in a bond of such radical dependence that the duality as a whole remained forever beyond our grasp; attempting to apprehend the one would reveal only the other. In reflection, ““the reflection-reflecting” which is reflected-on exists for a “reflection-reflecting” which is reflective.” (p.214)

Both the reflective and the reflected-on are independent and yet they are each profoundly affected in their being by the other. The reflective “derives its being from its function [to reflect] and its function from the for-itself reflected on” (p.214), and the reflected-on knows, non-thetically, that it itself is observed, i.e. it has “a consciousness (of) itself as having *an outside*… it makes itself an object for—” (p.214).

The reflected-on and the reflective are therefore a unity separated by a nothingness. Now, this nothingness must “be made-to-be” (p.215) however, neither term is capable of issuing this nothingness. What is the solution to this? Recall that the pre-reflective for-itself is a “unitary structure of being… [which is] its own nothingness in the form of *having to be it*” (p.215). Sartre avails himself of this same principle in reflection asserting that the reflection (both terms taken together; reflective and reflected-on) is “*one being*… not an addition of being” (p.215) and it is this totality which *has to be* its own nothingness; “it is not the appearance of a new consciousness directed on the for-itself but an intra-structural modification which the for-itself realizes in itself; in a word it is the for-itself which makes itself exist in the mode reflective-reflected-on, instead of being simply in the mode of the dyad reflection-reflecting” (p.215).

Since the two terms are separated by a nothingness, “the phenomenon of reflection is a nihilation of the for-itself, a nihilation which does not come to it from without but which it *has to be*.” (p.215) Sartre now wants to investigate this nihilation; specifically, what is its motivation?

Recall that the whole reason for the upsurge of the for-itself in the first place was that the in-itself may come to know itself as in-itself; so that the in-itself may be its own foundation. However, the for-itself fails in this by losing itself in the three ekstases and constantly escaping itself through the unavoidable reflection-reflecting dyad at its heart. Reflection, for Sartre, “is a second effort by the for-itself to found itself; that is, *to be for itself what it is*.” (p.216)

So reflection is a “being which recovers itself and establishes itself as a given… [while at the same time being] that which it recovers and founds, that which it preserves from the ecstatic scattering.” (p.216) This prompts Sartre to call its motivation “a double attempt, simultaneously an objectivation and an interiorization. To be to itself as an object-in-itself in the absolute unity of interiorization – that is what the being-of-reflection has to be.” (p.216)

Of course, since the reflection “must be this recovery in the mode of being which is its own; that is, in the mode of the for-itself” (p.216), it is inevitable that this project will ultimately result in failure, for the for-itself is fundamentally a flight; a flight which it has to be; “The ensemble consequently remains a nihilated in-itself.” (p.217)

Here we see the same pattern at work that we have already seen in the for-itself; “the being which effects the recovery must be constituted in the mode of the for-itself, and the being which is to be recovered must exist as for-itself. And these two beings must be *the same being*. But exactly in so far as this being recovers *itself*, it causes an absolute distance to exist between itself and itself – in the unity of being.” (p.217)

All reflection is knowledge, that is, has a positional character; Sartre describes this in the following way; “it [the reflective] affirms the consciousness reflected-on. But… to affirm *this* object is simultaneously to deny that I am this object.” (p.218) Now, the problem here is that the reflective cannot take this affirmation all the way because “it *is-in-order-to-be* the reflected-on… It does not then detach itself completely from the reflected-on, and it can not grasp the reflected-on “from a point of view.”” (p.218) Reflective knowledge is a totality, a “lightning intuition” (p.218), and therefore quite different from ‘normal’ knowledge which is acquired by positing an object separate from oneself and gradually learning about it in stages. In fact, Sartre calls the reflected-on a “quasi-object for reflection” precisely because it “is not presented yet as something *outside* reflection – that is, as a being on which one can “take a point of view,”” (p.218) and asserts that “[r]eflection is a recognition rather than knowledge.” (p.219)

Bringing the discussion back to temporality, Sartre recommends extending Descartes’ *cogito* beyond the instant which is where we have seen Descartes restricted it to. Descartes founded his existence on his ability to doubt but doubt limited to the instant is nothing more than a suspension of judgement. Doubt requires “an insufficiency of reasons for affirming or for denying – which refers to the past – and… [must] be maintained deliberately until the intervention of new elements – which is already a project of the future.” (p.219)

So, to “discover oneself doubting [through reflection] is already to be ahead of oneself in the future… and to be behind oneself in the past… and to be outside of oneself in the world as presence to the object which one doubts.” (p.220) All of this equally applies to any reflective statement we might make and means that reflection temporalises itself. This follows quite naturally when we realise that reflection is precisely a *temporal* for-itself conscious of itself. Sartre draws some conclusions here: “(1) Reflection, as the mode of being of the for-itself, must be as temporalization, and it is itself its past and its future. (2) By nature reflection extends its laws and its certitude to the possibilities which *I am* and to the past which *I was*.” (p.220)

Sartre now considers an objection. How can this reflection be apodictic when we are all familiar with the many errors we make when reflecting on our past? Sartre replies that “it is free from any error to the exact extent that it apprehends the past as that which haunts the present in non-thematic form.” (p.221) To understand what Sartre is saying here we need to recall that, as for-itself, “when I say, “I read, I doubt, I hope, *etc*.”… I reach beyond my present toward the past” (p.221) as that which I have to be. There can be no doubt in this because it is not based on knowledge (an object posited for a subject) but rather on the very being of the for-itself. Now since the reflective consciousness reflects nothing more than the (reflected-on) for-itself and this for-itself is its past (as having to be it), the reflective for-itself apprehends the past with the same certainty. This certainty doesn’t generate anything like perfect recall (because it’s not on the plane of memory). Rather, as we have seen, reflection is a “lightning intuition”, a “recognition rather than knowledge”. As Sartre says; “I can make many an error when recalling to myself in the reflective mode my past feelings or my past ideas; this is because I am on the plane of memory. At that moment I no longer *am* my past but I am thematizing it. We are then no longer dealing with the reflective act.” (p.221)

So, to return to the narrative; since reflection is a reflecting on a for-itself which temporalises itself, it is “consciousness *of the three* ekstatic dimensions. It is a non-thetic consciousness (of) flow and a thetic consciousness *of* duration.” (p.221) It “apprehends temporality and reveals it as the unique and incomparable mode of being of a selfness – that is, as historicity.” (p.221) “Historicity” refers to the unique way the for-itself temporalises itself as a concrete being in the world; i.e. with a history (past). It does this through the pre-reflective consciousness which we have seen is the primary consciousness.

Along with this primary, non-thetic consciousness (of) flow that is historicity, reflection is also a thetic consciousness *of* duration which is psychological in nature and the opposite of historicity. It is this psychological duration that Sartre says we “daily make use of as successions of organized temporal forms” (p.222) and by “organized forms” he means things like emotional states, qualities and acts (which we will look at in more detail shortly). He speaks, for example, of this joy which appears after the humiliation I suffered yesterday. Relations of before and after operate here and we often use these psychic entities for *dating*; “the reflective consciousness of man-in-the-world in his daily existence is found in the face of psychic objects” (p.222).

These psychic objects appear to me as if somehow detached from me; “We speak of a joy which I *have* or which I *had*; we say that it is *my* joy as if I were its support” or “I *experience* this joy as if it came to imprint itself like a seal on the texture of my temporalization” (p.222). This is psychic duration and Sartre sees it as being constituted by entities which act like “autonomous organizations” (p.222) visited on us; “the succession of psychic *facts*” (p.222).

However, “it is not conceivable that the unreflective for-itself, which historicizes itself in its upsurge, should *be itself* these qualities, these states, and these acts.” (p.222) In fact, “if we apprehend the for-itself in its historicity, psychic duration vanishes and states, qualities, and acts disappear to give place to being-for-itself as such” (p.223). The for-itself as a pre-reflective being which *flows*, which flees itself through the three ekstases of temporality, which is “a consciousness of the world and not *of* self” (p.223), can therefore have nothing to do with such things as qualities or states.

“Here we are then in the presence of two temporalities: the original temporality of which we *are* the temporalization, and psychic temporality which simultaneously appears as incompatible with the mode of being of our being and as an inter-subjective reality, the object of science, the goal of human acts” (p.223).

But how does this psychic temporality arise? It is clearly derived, but it cannot be from original temporality which “constitutes nothing other than itself”, and “it is incapable of constituting *itself*, for it is only a successive order of facts.” (p.223) Sartre claims that psychic temporality only appears to reflection and reflection must therefore constitute it in some way.

In order to see how this happens we must now distinguish between pure and impure reflection. Pure reflection is the simple presence of the reflective for-itself to the for-itself reflected-on and is at once the original form of reflection and its ideal form. It is “the pure and simple discovery of the historicity which it is” (p.223). Impure reflection, on the other hand, is what constitutes the succession of psychic facts and it is derived from pure reflection.

Reflection “is a type of being in which the for-itself *is* in order to be to itself what it is” (p.224) but impure reflection “is-in-order-to-be the reflected-on as itself… [Its motivation is] to apprehend the reflected-on as in-itself in order to make itself be that in-itself which is apprehended.” (p.224)

Basically what all of this means is that pure reflection is the for-itself trying to recover itself as in-itself through reflection, that is, through the semi-positing of a for-itself reflected-on; ‘semi’ because it cannot completely sever the connection or it would no longer be the self it is trying to recover. Impure reflection is an attempt, not to be itself (a for-itself) in the mode of the in-itself, but to make the reflected-on an in-itself so that it may *be* this. This means “three forms exist in impure reflection; the reflective, the reflected-on, and an in-itself which the reflective has to be in so far as this in-itself would be the reflected-on” (p.224). This in-itself is “the reflected-on as a pure object for the reflective” (p.224). For the first time, the reflected-on is now posited as outside the reflective and the latter posits itself as *not being* the former. We now have “an in-itself capable of being determined, qualified, behind the reflected-on.” (p.225) Sartre calls this the “transcendent objectivation of the reflected-on” (p.225).

Sartre notes that this act of reflection is in bad faith. It seems “to declare that the reflective *is not* the reflected-on in the mode of not being what one is not… But this is only *in order to* recover subsequently the affirmation of identity and to affirm concerning this in-itself that “I am *it*.” (p.226) It is bad faith because it “constitutes itself as the revelation of *the object which I make-to-be-me*” (p.226) seeing in it a fixed psyche that is more than just a point of view and is somehow a causal force on my freedom as for-itself.

Sartre calls this transcendent in-itself behind the reflected-on, a “shadow of being” (p.226) and asserts that this is what the psychologist studies and treats as *psychic fact*. It is here that the psychic forms we talked about earlier manifest. Sartre now gives a description of this in-itself he will call *Psyche*.

1. Psyche is a term which encapsulates the Ego, its states, its qualities and its acts. “The Ego with the double grammatical form of “I” and “Me” represents our person as a transcendent psychic unity.” (p.226)

Qualities are traits or “potentialities which constitute our character and our habits” (pp.226-227). States are features which actually exist (as opposed to qualities which are mere potential), and essentially cash out as concrete emotions which I am. “A quality… is an innate or acquired disposition which contributes to qualify my personality. The state, on the contrary, is much more accidental and contingent; it is something which happens to me.” (p.227) Acts are “the whole synthetic activity of the person… as related to ends” (p.227). An example Sartre gives is the boxer’s training which is an act because it “transcends and supports the For-itself, which moreover realizes itself in and through this training.” (p.227)

1. By the term “Psychic”, Sartre refers to the “cognitive acts… of the reflective For-itself.” (p.228) The unreflective for-itself is its possibilities in the non-thetic mode and reveals the state of the world as bound with its own given state; hence “the man who is angry sees on the face of his opponent the objective quality of asking for a punch in the nose. Hence we have such expressions as “itching to be spanked” or “asking for trouble.”” (p.228) When reflection arises in the midst of these possibilities of the for-itself it “apprehends the ontological relation of the For-itself to its possibilities but as an object. Thus the act rises as the virtual object of the reflective consciousness.” (p.228)

The point here is that what Sartre calls the “reflective upsurge” surpasses the for-itself (which is pre-reflective consciousness) “toward the virtual object which the reflective has to be.” (p.228) Pure reflective consciousness can discover the for-itself reflected-on but impure reflection bypasses this and apprehends the in-itself behind the reflected-on, which is the “organized totality of these virtual and transcendent existents… [and] which are the natural object of *psychological* research.” (p.228)

1. These psychic objects, although virtual (being mere shadows of being), are not abstract; “they are given as the concrete in-itself which the reflective has to be beyond the reflected-on.” (pp.228-229) Sartre calls the immediate presence of these objects (qualities, states and acts) *evidence*.
2. The Psychic is, like the for-itself, apprehended across the three ekstatic dimensions of temporality and it appears as “constituted by the synthesis of a Past, a Present, and a Future.” (p.230) However, “due to the fact that the psychic object is in-itself, its present can not be flight, not can its future be pure possibility. In these forms of flow there is an essential priority of the Past” (p.230). The Future *is* already, a “now” which is not yet revealed and the Present is a “*being there*”, a “now” constituted as having been-there.

Again, this sense of the psychic as being “already *made*” reveals its essential structure as concrete in-itself that is “sustained in the face of the reflective by a sort of inertia” (p.231) But whereas the for-itself *has to be* its unity, the unity of the psychic totality is *given*, *made-to-be* by impure reflection.

Sartre thinks that Bergson’s conceptions of duration and interpenetration fail because they are limited to the psychic state, not consciousness as for-itself. Bergson conceives of time as a series of “nows” that somehow, “magically” and “irrationally” flow into one another. This is the nature of psychic temporality.

Sartre concludes this section by stating that these psychic forms we have been looking at are related to each other by “action from a distance of prior forms on posterior forms.” (p.233) This influence will appear either as penetration or motivation. In the former “the reflective apprehends as a single object two psychic objects which had at first been given separately” (p.234), resulting in a new psychic object. An example of this is where two feelings are blended, say, affection tinged with envy. In the latter, “the two objects each remain at its own place” (p.234). For example, the humiliation I felt yesterday is the reason for my mood today.

Because, in reflection, we are not dealing with a being which *has to be* its future and its past, there is *no connection* between the psychic forms that arise from its activity, unlike in the case of the for-itself; “this action at a distance is totally magic and irrational” (p.234). This means that psychologists’ attempts to analyse these psychic forms and deduce “bonds of rational causality” between them are doomed to failure. For Sartre, the apparent “causality [between psychic objects] is a degradation of the ekstatic for-itself… [a] degradation into magic, into an in-itself which is what it is at its own place.” (p.236) The psychologist must therefore be content to merely “describe these irrational bonds and take them as an original given of the psychic world.” (p.236)

So, “reflective consciousness is constituted as consciousness *of* duration, and hence psychic duration appears to consciousness… But psychic temporality disappears completely if the for-itself remains on the un-reflective level or if impure reflection purifies itself.” (p.236) This makes sense. When I am completely engaged in some act, I don’t notice the passage of time; I simply *am* my past (in the mode of not being it) while I possibilize my future.

The central difference between original temporality and psychic temporality is that the latter *is* while the former temporalises itself. In addition, psychic temporality *is* in the form of before-after, which orders the relations between objects all equally past. This psychic duration “which can not be by itself must perpetually *be made-to-be*.” (p.236) It is composed of “nows” which have all been and which influence each other through action at a distance.

Despite all we have said about impure reflection and the psychic world it reveals; it is not purely ideal, nor is it an illusion. Sartre does say that in “one sense, its existence is purely ideal; in another it *is*, since it *is-made-to-be*, since it is revealed to consciousness.” (p.237) In short, it is a phenomenological reality since it is what is revealed to me when I wish to see myself. In addition, Sartre points out that it “exists as a *real situation* of the for-itself, for it can be that in terms of which the for-itself determines itself to be what it has to be.” (p.237) For example, if I know I have a short fuse, I might decide not to meet a particular person who annoys me easily.

**Chapter Three – Transcendence**

In this section, Sartre wants to take us back to the problem he raised in the Introduction – “what is the original relation of human reality to the being of phenomena or being-in-itself?” (p.238) We rejected the realist solution (transcendent being (the in-itself) cannot act on consciousness) and the idealist solution (consciousness cannot “construct” the transcendent through subjectivity). Hence the “original relation to being could not be an external relation which would unite two substances originally isolated.” (p.238)

As you might expect the key to this relation is not to be found in the in-itself, but rather in the for-itself. However, up until now our point of departure has been the for-itself as non-thetic self-consciousness. Sartre states here that, given that consciousness is initially intentional in nature, in order for the for-itself to exist as non-thetic self-consciousness, it must first be “a thetic consciousness *of* something” (p.239). It is here that Sartre will discuss this relation, through a specific type of relation; knowledge.

I. KNOWLEDGE AS A TYPE OF RELATION BETWEEN THE FOR-ITSELF AND THE IN-ITSELF

Sartre begins by claiming that all knowledge is intuitive. “Deduction and discursive argument… are only instruments which lead to intuition.” (p.240) Sartre starts with Husserl’s definition of intuition as “the presence of the thing (*Sache*) “in person” to consciousness” which means that knowledge is “of the type of being… “presence to—.”” (p.240)

However, since being-present is an ekstatic mode of the for-itself, i.e. the in-itself can never by itself be presence, Sartre recommends that we reverse the terms of this definition: “intuition is the presence of consciousness to the thing.” (p.240)

With that settled for now, Sartre wants to investigate the ontological meaning behind the statement that consciousness must be consciousness *of* something.

The for-itself “is the foundation of its own nothingness in the form of the phantom dyad – the reflection-reflecting” (p.240) but if this was all there was, then there would be *nothing* because both aspects would be constantly annihilating themselves. In order to avoid this, the *reflecting* must reflect *something*. However, if the *reflection* was a something, then it would become an in-itself. The solution to this problem is to realise that the “reflection can be simultaneously “something to be reflected” and *nothing*, but only if it makes itself qualified by something other than itself or, if you prefer, if it is reflected as a relation to an outside which it is not.” (p.241)

This *something* the for-itself is not is “*that to which it* [the for-itself] *is presence*” (p.241), which means that non-being has been revealed as an essential structure of presence; “Presence encloses a radical negation as presence to that which one is not.” (p.241) This notion of non-being is assumed *a priori* in every theory of knowledge since without the apprehension that the object is that which is *not* consciousness, it is impossible to even formulate the notion of an object.

This is the original relation which is the foundation of all knowledge and we have shown it to be negative. On this basis, Sartre re-formulates the definition of consciousness we gave earlier; “The for-itself is a being such that in its being, its being is in question in so far as this being is essentially a certain way of *not being* a being which it posits simultaneously as other than itself.” (p.242)

So, knowledge turns out to be a mode of being; “the very being of the for-itself in so far as this is presence to—” (p.242). In addition, “[t]he “something” which must qualify the reflected in order that the dyad “reflection-reflecting” may not dissolve in nothingness is pure negation.” (p.242) This is what it means to be consciousness *of* something.

Next, Sartre looks more closely at the nature of this negation. He distinguishes between two kinds of negation; external and internal. External negation is “a purely external bond established between two beings by a witness.” (p.243) An example of this is when I say, “A cup is not an inkwell” and this negation does not modify the beings in any way. Internal negation, on the other hand, is “a relation between two beings [such] that the one which is denied to the other qualifies the other at the heart of its essence – by absence.” (p.243) An example of this is to say, “I am not handsome”, which is not to be understood as denying something of myself while I remain a positive totality, but as indicating that this negation is a “real quality of myself” (p.243) that characterises me from within. Clearly, internal negation can only be applied to being-for-itself. Moreover, it is for this reason that knowing “belongs to the for-itself alone… [because] only the for-itself can appear to itself as not being what it knows.” (p.244)

In order for the for-itself to not be an object it cannot be completely “severed from all connection with me. I can not deny that I am a particular being if I am at a distance from that being.” (p.245) Sartre claims that it is “in terms of the being which it is not that a being can make known to itself what it is not.” (p.245) This means that the internal negation, despite appearing as the result of an upsurge of the for-itself, is actually built on the being which the for-itself is not; i.e. the in-itself. In this way Sartre establishes a “concrete ontological bond” (p.245) between the for-itself and the in-itself which it is not.

Sartre continues by affirming that “it is necessary to see the denied qualities [what the for-itself is *not*] as a constitutive factor of the being of the for-itself, for the for-itself must be there outside itself upon them; it must be *they* in order to deny that it is they.” (p.245) The origin of the internal negation is the in-itself. Outside of this “there is nothing except an emptiness, a nothingness which is distinguished from the thing only by a pure negation for which *this* thing furnishes the very content.” (p.245) All that is outside the in-itself is a reflection of that nothing which is defined by the in-itself precisely because it is the nothingness of *this* in-itself and as such refers directly back to it.

In this lies the reason why a theory of knowledge built on materialism can’t work; because materialism tries to derive knowledge by producing a substance in terms of another substance. Sartre avoids this because one of his terms is not substance, it is negation.

“The for-itself is outside itself in the in-itself since it causes itself to be defined by what it is not” (p.245), hence the first bond between the two is one of being. Sartre notes that this bond is not characterised by *lack* or *absence*, which we have already encountered. Rather, this bond is one of “ontological being, the being which I am not represents the absolute plenitude of the in-itself.” (p.246)

In knowledge “the only *being* which can be encountered and which is perpetually *there* is the *known*. The knower is not; he is not apprehensible… the knower is the pure reflection of a non-being” (p.246).

We can see exactly what Sartre is talking about if we consider the case of *fascination*. In fascination, “the knower is absolutely nothing but a pure negation; he does not find or recover himself anywhere – he *is not*.” (p.246) All that exists is “a gigantic object in a desert world.” (p.246) However, Sartre stresses that this does not indicate that consciousness has *fused* with the object, and he explicitly rejects the “pantheistic intuitions” of Rousseau who claims that on certain occasions “he *melted* into the universe, that the world alone was suddenly found present as an absolute presence” (p.246). This is clearly mistaken for if his consciousness really fused with the world, the whole ensemble would become an in-itself and the world, including the in-itself, would disappear as presence.

Sartre also wants to define the word “immediate” as in when we talk about the *immediate* presence of the known to the knower. Immediacy implies the absence of a mediator but if there is no mediator then presence cannot be either continuity or discontinuity. Continuity necessarily requires an intermediary term while discontinuity won’t facilitate a relation between the for-itself and the in-itself because such a separation is “an emptiness – *i.e.,* *a nothing* – but it is a *realized* nothing – *i,e.,* in-itself.” (p.247) Rather, the presence of consciousness to the object is “pure *denied identity*.” (p.247)

Knowledge “*adds* nothing to being and creates nothing… It only brings it about that *there is* being.” (p.248) This realisation can only arise as the result of *both* the in-itself and the for-itself together. The nothingness through which presence (as negation via reflection) can come into the world needs the intentional for-itself, but presence is only meaningful as presence to— (an in-itself) and so all negation requires something to be negated. “In this sense every revelation of a positive characteristic of being is the counterpart of an ontological determination as pure negativity in the being of the for-itself.”

To conclude, Sartre observes how the relation between knowing and being can best be captured through the word “realise”. Realise has two meanings; “I realize a project in so far as I give it being, but I also *realize my situation in so far as I live it and* make it be with my being… To know is to *realize* in both senses of the term. It is to cause being “to be there” while having to be the reflected negation of this being.” (p.249)

By means of a final summary, Sartre defines transcendence as “that inner and realizing negation which reveals the in-itself while determining the being of the for-itself.” (p.249)

II. DETERMINATION AS NEGATION

Sartre starts out here by asking; “To *what* being is the for-itself presence?” (p.249) There is a problem with this question though. It is badly phrased says Sartre. Being “can not possess the determination “this one” to answer the question “which?”” (p.249) Being is what it is. This question only has meaning if it is posed already in a world and a “world” can only be for a for-itself. “Consequently the for-itself can not be present to *this* being rather than to *that* since it is the presence of the for-itself which causes the existence of a “this” rather than a “that.” (p.249) In the prior chapter, we saw the for-itself denying that it is a *particular* being, however, Sartre says “original transcendence is not determined in terms of a *this*; it causes a *this* to exist.” (p.249)

Sartre then asks should we rather say original presence is a presence to *all* being? This would be to make the same mistake though because “totality can come to being only by the for-itself.” (p.250) This presents another contradiction; “*this* particular being can be called *this* only on the ground of the presence of *all* being… But conversely since totality is an internal ontological relation of “thises,” it can be revealed only in and through the individual “thises.”” (p.250) Sartre will now explain this contradiction.

The for-itself “has to be – in the mode of being what it is not and of not being what it is – its own totality as a detotalized totality” (p.250) and it is on this ground that “being stands before it as *all* which the for-itself is not.” (p.250) And in exactly the same way as we saw in the first chapter, i.e. via negation, “the very meaning of the for-itself is outside in being, but it is through the for-itself that the meaning of being appears.” (p.251) This means that being can exist (for the for-itself) originally only as totality. Sartre calls this original negation, *radical*.

Once more, we see that the nothing outside the world (the for-itself) reveals being as a world, and human reality has to be this nothing (as the reflection-reflecting dyad). In this way, we can also see that this “nothing constitutes – along with the original presence to being – the circuit of selfness.” (pp.251-252)

However, in order to make itself the totality of the world, human reality must reach “beyond a concrete negation which it has to be as actual presence to being… Its being can *be* its own totality only to the extent that it is a surpassing toward the whole which it has to be” (p.252). What this means is that the totality is nothing more than a collection of “thises” the for-itself must, in some sense, ignore (surpass) in order to apprehend (negate) the totality.

Once the “thises” have been surpassed and the totality apprehended, I can “make known to myself by means of being-in-itself a certain concrete reality which I have to not-be” (p.252) and this particular in-itself will appear on the ground of the totality of being. To distinguish it from the radical, Sartre calls this negation, *present*.

The relation between the ‘all’ and the ‘this’ is a little delicate. The appearance of the ‘this’ on the ground, “since it is the correlate of the appearance of my own concrete negation on the syncretic ground of a radical negation, implies that I both am and am not that total negation or, if you prefer, that I am it in the mode of “non-being” and that I am not it in the mode of being.” (p.252)

In addition, I *am not* the ‘thises’ but my “manner of not-being-them is to have to not-be” (p.253) them on a ground of totality which is already a negativity. In this way the “*this* supposes then a negation of the negation” (p.253), that is, negating the original negation which revealed the world as totality so that the individual could appear on it. From all of this, we can see that the relation of the ‘this’ to the ‘all’ is an external relation.

Even though Sartre has described the radical negation as “original”, it would be a mistake to see this as prior in some fashion. The *world* is “revealed simultaneously as a synthetic totality and as a purely additive collection of all the “thises.”… But in so far as this radical nihilation is always beyond a concrete and present nihilation, the world appears always ready to open like a box to allow the appearance of one or several “thises” which *already were* (there in the heart of the undifferentiation of the ground) what they are now as a differentiated figure.” (pp.253-254)

Sartre takes this opportunity to discuss *space*. Space, he says, “can not be a *being*. It is a moving relation between beings which are unrelated. It is the total independence of the in-itselfs, as it is revealed to a being which is presence to “all” the in-itself as the independence *of each one in relation to the others*.” (p.254)

So, space is certainly not some kind of container individual “thises” appear in. It is the way beings are revealed as having no relation to each other, that is, as totally independent. Because of this, space is “pure exteriority”, which means it must be revealed by a witness; the for-itself. Indeed, Sartre says space is “spatialized” by the for-itself which is “co-present to the whole and to the “this.” (p.254)

Space is actually a relation between the “all” and the individual “thises” we have been looking at; “Thus the *continuous* as a formal quality of the ground allows the discontinuous to appear as a type of external relation between the *this* and the totality. It is precisely this perpetual evanescence of the totality into collection, of the continuous into the discontinuous that defines *space*.” (p.254) So, space is not in the ground (totality) or the figure (“thises”), rather it is the way the ground can “always disintegrate into figures; it is neither the continuous nor the discontinuous, but the permanent passage from continuous to discontinuous.” (p.254)

Since space is continuously spatialised, this also means that it *is not*. This is enough for Sartre to reject the idea that space is some kind of ‘being’ or ‘thing’ but also allows him to dispense with Kant’s notion that space is “a form imposed on phenomena by the *a priori* structure of our sensibility.” (p.255)

Naturally, the for-itself is not space and the reason for this is that it apprehends itself as a negation of being-in-itself (“thises”) inasmuch as the “thises” are revealed through that mode of pure exteriority that is extension. In negating the extension of the “thises”, the for-itself reveals itself as *not* spatial. Tying things together nicely, Sartre also points out that this act (the negating of the in-itself and the subsequent denial of itself as exteriority) is precisely the way the for-itself spatializes space.

Finally, Sartre wants to determine what type of being the external negation has. It clearly belongs to the for-itself. If it belonged to a newspaper (a particular in-itself) which say, denied that it was the table, it “would be ekstatically outside itself and in the table which it denies, and its relation to the table would be an internal negation; it would thereby cease even to be in-itself and would become for-itself.” (p.256) But, it also can’t be within the for-itself since the for-itself is a pure internal negation.

Sartre concludes that “if I say, “The inkwell is not the table,” I am thinking *nothing* [because the negation belongs neither to the for-itself (me) nor the in-itself (the inkwell)]. Thus determination is a *nothing* which does not belong as an internal structure either to the thing or to consciousness, but its being is *to-be-summoned* by the For-itself across a system of internal negations in which the in-itself is revealed in its indifference to all that is not itself.” (p.257)

III. QUALITY AND QUANTITY, POTENTIALITY, INSTRUMENTALITY

Sartre defines ***quality*** as the “being of the *this* when it is considered apart from all external relation with the world or with other *thises*.” (p.257) He rejects the idealistic notion that quality is just a “simple subjective determination” (p.257) of the perceiver. In addition, Sartre discards the notion that the object is a “transcendent unity of qualities” or an “empty form which holds together disparate qualities.” (p.257) In this, Sartre is explicitly rejecting Husserl’s claim that “a synthetic necessity unconditionally unites color and form” (p.258).

The “yellow of the lemon is not a subjective mode of apprehending the lemon; it *is* the lemon.” (p.257) In fact, “the lemon is extended throughout [all of] its qualities [sour, rough, etc.], and each of its qualities is extended throughout each of the others.” (p.257) We can even say the yellow of the lemon is sour and the sourness of the lemon is yellow. Sartre calls this the “total interpenetration” of the qualities, which we can also call the *this*.

The apprehension of quality does not add to or change anything about being. All it does is make it explicit that “*being is there as this*.” (p.258) So “a quality is not an external aspect of being, for being, since it has no “within,” can not have a “without.” (p.258) This excludes the realist position.

As with everything we have talked about, quality can only come into being “for a nothingness which by nature *is not* being.” (p.258) In the same way we have seen regarding all determination of the in-itself, “the For-itself makes known to itself what it is by means of quality. For the For-itself, to perceive red as the color of this notebook is to reflect on itself as the internal negation of that quality… [it is] the consciousness of the impossibility on principle for the For-itself to exist as color – that is, by being what it is.” (pp.258-259)

Qualities are revealed on the background of the “this” in exactly the same way we have seen the “this” appear on the background of the world; i.e. through the denial of the for-itself. The “for-itself… can deny itself from various points of view when confronting the *this* and… [this act] reveals the quality as a new *this* on the ground of the thing.” (p.259) The for-itself denies itself in this way (to reveal quality) because “in order for its determination as the nothingness of being to be full, the for-itself must realize itself as a certain unique manner of not being *this* being.” (p.260) Sartre calls this the “absolute determination of negativity” (p.260).

Sartre claims that this absolute determination “belongs to the freedom of the For-itself… [in the sense that it is] grasped *across* a freedom” (p.260) because, “[w]hile I can not make this orange peel cease being green, it is I who am responsible for my apprehending it as a rough green or a green roughness.” (p.260)

There is one difference between qualities appearing on a “this” and a “this” appearing on the world; “instead of the figure’s appearing on an undifferentiated ground, it is wholly penetrated by the ground” (p.260). When we saw the “this” arise on the background of the world, it was distinct from its background, however in the case of a quality, as we have already discussed, qualities interpenetrate each other and so one necessarily refers to and includes the others. As soon as I apprehend the lemon as yellow, its roughness is already revealed as its undifferentiated ground.

Sartre next embarks on a discussion of abstraction which he considers to be revealed in the ekstatic nature of the for-itself conditioned by the original negation which first causes being to appear with all of its qualities.

Abstraction can only occur on the ground of concrete revealed qualities; “abstraction is not the apprehension of a quality “in mid-air”” (p.260) because then it would be purely subjective. The abstracted quality “does not lose its density of being… [instead the background qualities] which are given across it dissolve” (p.260).

It is also ekstatic in the sense that “it can be realized only as a presence to being beyond being; it is a surpassing. This presence to being can be realized only on the level of possibility and in so far as the For-itself has to be its own possibilities.” (p.260) Now, “being beyond being” just highlights that the for-itself is a transcendent, ekstatic (future) being, so what he is saying is that abstraction takes a concrete quality and projects a particular possibility of it in the future where it is appears independently of the “this” it is currently wrapped up in. In Sartrean terms; “The green is the peculiar possibility of this profile in so far as it is revealed across the possibilities which I am; that is, in so far as it is made-to-be.” (pp.260-261) So, “the abstract haunts the concrete as a possibility fixed in the in-itself… the abstract is always there but *to-come*” (p.261)

Moving on to ***quantity*** now, Sartre defines this as an “ideal nothingness in-itself… pure exteriority; it does not depend on the terms added but is only the affirmation of their independence.” (p.263) We have already seen that a *this* and a *that* can only be related by an external negation. This external negation is both being-in-itself and pure ideality; the former because it does not belong to the For-itself and the latter because it does not have any concrete effect in the world (if I count a group of three people, “[b]eing a “group of three” is not a concrete property of the group” (p.263)). It is *nothingness* because, like all revealed aspects of the in-itself, it is a negation (by which the for-itself also comes to know itself). Since it doesn’t belong to anything (either things or totalities) it is completely “isolated and detached from the surface of the world” (p.264).

In this, quantity is of the same kind of relation as space; both being pure exteriority, “the relation of things which are unrelated” (p.264).

This whole discussion serves to deny Husserl’s *categories* (more and less – first, second… – etc.) which are actually “the ideal mixing of things which leaves them wholly intact” (p.264).

Thus far, we have considered the for-itself as it is related to being as if it were an instantaneous consciousness (the Cartesian *cogito*) but it is now time to include the ekstatic nature of the for-itself. We have seen that the for-itself comes to know itself through the in-itself as negation and this negation occurs as presence. However, since the for-itself is an ekstatic being (it has its being outside of it, *diasporatically*, ‘spread’ over temporality), this presence cannot be a simple negation but must include the ekstatic dimension of the future; “being-in-itself is revealed to a being which arises as about-to-come to itself” (p.264), i.e. a being which is not what it is (because it is an ekstatic relation to its own possibilities).

Since this “futural” element (I am always beyond what I am) is a part of my presence to being, “the “this” to which I am present appears to me as something which I surpass toward myself” (p.265). This means that in making the negation which reveals the “this”, I simultaneously flee this negation by negating it (a second, “complementary” negation) in the direction of my possibilities beyond the present. Sartre summarises this idea by saying, “What the for-itself denies, it denies “with the dimension of a future.”” (p.265)

“In so far as the for-itself denies itself in the future, the *this* concerning which it makes itself a negation is revealed as coming to itself from the future.” (p.266) This possibility of the for-itself is revealed as the ***potentiality***of the “this” of being what it is. The first potentiality Sartre looks at is *permanence*, which clearly comes to the “this” on the ground of the future, “not [as] a purely established *given*, but a potentiality.” (p.266)

Sartre digresses here to talk about the “about-to-come” aspect of the negation (which we have already seen is the original negation cast in the ekstatic dimension of the future). This future possibility is what the for-itself lacks in order to become a negation *in-itself* and as such, Sartre relabels it the ““meaning-to-come” of the negation… It is in the future that there is revealed the exact meaning of what I have to not-be [the original negation of the “this”] as a correlate of the exact negation which I have to be [the negation of the present as the for-itself flees it toward the future].” (p.266)

This is where abstraction fits in; “pure green comes to the “green-roughness-light” on the ground of the future as its meaning.” (p.266) The abstraction, as essence of an existent, is “a meaning which is never given and which forever haunts [the existent]” (p.267).

Sartre goes on to say that the abstraction of certain qualities cannot just be considered in terms of the “thises”, rather abstraction is “the original mode of being of the for-itself, necessary in order that there may be, in general, things and a world.” (p.267) This is because abstraction, since it is revealed by the “meaning-to-come” for the for-itself, is thereby built into the structure of the world and in fact, necessary for the concrete.

Permanence and the abstract then appear to be the same, “Permanence is pure possibility for a *this* to be consistent with its essence [as apprehended in the abstract].” (p.267) What we have here is something similar to the way the for-itself is related to its own possibilities, i.e. “a fusion of the existing *this* with its essence to-come.” (p.267) What’s more, this “fusion must be such that the abstract [essence] is the foundation of the concrete… [and the] concrete is the foundation of the abstract. In other words, the concrete “flesh and blood” existence must *be* the essence, and the essence must itself be produced as a total concretion” (p.267).

This fusion is “perpetually indicated but impossible… [and] indicates… the fusion of past, present, and future” (p.268). It is, in other words, value (which we have seen in relation to the for-itself as a lacked totality; the self the for-itself aims at) as transcendence and this is what Sartre calls *beauty*. “Beauty therefore represents an ideal state of the world, correlative with an ideal realization of the for-itself; in this realization the essence and the existence of things are revealed as identity to a being who, in this very revelation, would be merged with himself in the absolute unity of the in-itself.” (p.268) So in beauty, both the in-itself and the for-itself, through this fusion of the abstract (future) possibility of the “this” with the concrete (existing) this (brought about by the ekstatic negation of the “this” by the for-itself), merge with what is lacking in their presents.

As with value, the beautiful can only be apprehended as an *absence*; “it is revealed implicitly across the *imperfection* of the world.” (p.268) And of course, the beautiful is not an actually *realisable* potentiality, “It [merely] haunts the world as an unrealizable.” (p.268) Still Sartre does maintain that in so far as “the for-itself is beyond the crescent moon, next to a being-beyond-being which is the future full moon the full moon becomes the potentiality of the crescent moon.” (p.268)

Sartre sees potentiality as revealing itself in a movement analogous to what we have already seen with the original negation of the in-itself; in negating the future possibility of the “this” I make known the “this” as it is now. “I am beyond the crescent moon as the possibility of a radical negation of the moon as a full disc; and correlative with the return of my future negation toward my presence, the *full* moon comes back toward the crescent in order to determine it in *this* as a negation; the full moon is what the crescent lacks; it is the lack of the full moon which makes the crescent a crescent.” (p.269)

However, even though “[p]otentiality on the ground of the future turns back on the *this* to determine it” (p.270) we need to remember that it is different from the original negation of the in-itself in that “the relation between the *this* as in-itself and its potentiality is an external relation.” (p.270) While the crescent moon is seen as *lacking*—, it is *also* revealed as being fully what it is, complete in itself.

This means that “[t]he potentialities of the *this*, while strictly connected with it, are present as in-itselfs and are in a state of indifference in relation to it.” (p.270) This is because any potentiality in a “this” is only the “transcendent correlate of *my* possibility” (p.270), in itself, the “this” is just what it is. As the “this” appears to a for-itself though, because I am my own future (in the mode of not being it) it is *always* revealed as provided with potentialities.

Sartre describes the way the potentialities of the “this” are related to it as being in a state of *equivalence*. “This is because it does not have to be them” (p.270), which is another way of saying they exist in a state of indifference to it or they are founded on a relation of exteriority. To distinguish this from the possibilities of the for-itself, Sartre decides to call those “potentialities which refer back to the *this* without being made to be by it and without having to be – those we shall call *probabilities* to indicate that they exist in the mode of being of the in-itself.” (pp.270-271)

These probabilities, in the same way that we have seen meaning arise from the lacked totality which the self of the for-itself aims at as its future possibility, are the “meaning of being beyond being… as that which being *is not yet* without ever truly having *to be them*.” (p.271)

Next, Sartre briefly turns the discussion to science. Science “aims at establishing relations of simple exteriority” (p.271) between things in the world and the reason it does so is to “suppress the potential” (p.271) which it can’t grasp because the potentialities are (as pure external relations on the ground of the future) pure nothingness. However, while science suppresses this “potentializing structure of perception… [it] must presuppose it” (p.271) because, as we have seen, the abstract (which is revealed in potentiality) is necessary for the concrete.

None of the structures of being we have looked at thus far – the *this* and spatiality, permanence, essence, potentialities – are prior to any of the others: “the upsurge of the for-itself causes the thing to be revealed with the totality of its structures. Furthermore [as we saw with qualities] there is not one of these structures which does not imply all the others.” (pp.271-272) Once more Sartre asserts that there is no “substantial form” or “principle of unity” here that could serve as a ground or ‘container’ for the others.

Sartre considers the idea that “the world and the thing are revealed to the for-itself in a sort of contemplative intuition” (p.272). This can’t be however, because it would mean that the for-itself existed before the world as a standalone entity of some kind, something not unlike a Cartesian mind. The for-itself can only know itself in the negation of the world in the way Sartre has called the *circuit of selfness*.

We know that the project of the for-itself toward self arises through lack; not the *given* lack of the thing as potentiality, but the “lack which has to be to itself its own lack.” (p.272) A *given* lack (or a lack-in-itself) will vanish into exteriority meaning that it will be nothing more than an external relation between two beings in a state of indifference, the lacking (for-itself) and the lacked (future possibility). Now, “a being which constitutes itself as lack can determine itself only there upon *that which* it lacks and *which* it *is*” (p.272) meaning that the for-itself must constantly be toward the self it has to be while at the same time negating (*not* being) it. And the “only truly inner connection between that which lacks— and that which is lacking is the refusal” hence, “lack can be to itself its own lack only as a *refused lack*” (p.272)

To forge a connection between these two the negation must have its foundation “in the necessity for the being which lacks— *to be* that which it lacks. Thus the foundation of the negation is negation of negation.” (pp.272-273) What does this mean? The original negation is the apprehension that I *am not* what I lack, but this isn’t enough. I must be able to be that which I lack in order to make it *my* project. So I must be able to be (negate) that which I lack (the original negation). I must be able to *refuse* my lack (negation) in order to project myself toward it; “It is only as a lack *to be suppressed* that lack can be internal for the for-itself, and the for-itself can realize its own lack only by having to be it; that is, by being a project toward its suppression.” (p.273)

It is this apprehension of particular *lacks* which motivates us to certain actions. Sartre says here that some people try to explain these by appeal to “phantoms which we call *drives* or *appetites*.” (p.273) Sartre has a low opinion of this as an explanation because they are “by violence inserted into the psyche” and, since they simply appear as irreducible *givens* “are not understandable in themselves” (p.273).

Now, Sartre claims that this lack “can not be grasped thetically and known by the unreflective consciousness”, rather “it is accessible only to the purifying reflection” (p.273). However, on the level of consciousness *of* the world the lack appears in projection “as a transcendent and ideal characteristic” (p.273), which means that what we lack is revealed to us in the world of things. Indeed, Sartre says, “the world is revealed as haunted by absences to be realized, and each *this* appears with a cortege of absences which point to it and determine it.” (p.273) These absences (what is lacked) refer back to the *this* and the *this* refers toward the absences.

Sartre has an unusual conception of these absences that arouse action in the for-itself. He cannot say they “are revealed as to be realized *by me* since the “me” is a transcendent structure of the psyche and appears only to the reflective consciousness.” (p.274) Rather, they are “pure demands which rise as “voids to be filled” in the middle of the circuit of selfness.” (p.274) These voids are “manifested to the unreflective consciousness by a direct and personal urgency which is *lived* as such without being referred to *somebody* or thematised.” (p.274) This certainly concurs with experience. We don’t know why we are motivated towards certain things and away from others – indeed, these motivations just appear as a part of our being.

These voids appear as “*tasks*, and this world is a world of *tasks*.” (p.274) The *thises* which populate this world, in turn, manifest as both pure being and a unique *this* determined by these tasks and at once able to fulfil them; “The thing, in so far as it both rests in the quiet beatitude of indifference and yet points beyond it to tasks to be performed which make known to it what it has to be, is an instrument or utensil.” (p.274) This is what Sartre calls ***instrumentality***.

It is this instrumentality, Sartre says, that science strips things of in order to reveal them as purely *things*. “But this is because the scientist is concerned only with establishing purely exterior relations.” (p.275)

Sartre also wishes to correct Heidegger here. Heidegger, according to Sartre, thought of our being in the world as an escape from the world toward oneself. He thought all objectively present things (in-itselfs) were related in a structural totality of significance (in-order-to) which always culminated in a Dasein (for-itself).

Instead, Sartre maintains that to be in the world is “to escape from the world toward a beyond-the-world which is the future world… the totality of instruments is the exact correlate of my possibilities; and as I *am* my possibilities, the order of instruments in the world is the image of my possibilities projected in the in-itself; *i.e.*, the image of what I am” (p.275) I never know this image non-reflectively when I am “lost” in the world but instead “adapt myself to it in and through action” (p.275).

Sartre doesn’t disagree with Heidegger that the instrumental chain of “for whats” necessarily leads back to a “for whom”. However, he disagrees that the “for whom” terminates this chain; “this “for whom,” whose constitution is different from the “for what,” does not break the chain. It is simply one of the links; when it is confronted in the perspective of instrumentality, it does not allow an escape from the in-itself.” (p.275) Sartre is here referring to the perspective of the other, to whom I am just another instrument in the world.

Sartre summarises the preceding in the following way; “Thus to the extent that the for-itself is its own lack as a refusal correlative with its impulse toward self, being is revealed to the for-itself on the ground of the world as an instrumental-thing, and the world rises as the undifferentiated ground of indicative complexes of instrumentality.” (p.276)

One final thing Sartre adds here is that this ensemble is devoid of meaning, in fact, we cannot posit the problem of meaning on this level. Rather, the problem of meaning “can be posited only on the reflective level since it implies a self-discovery on the part of the for-itself.” (p.276)

We have shown what instrumentality *is* but now Sartre wants to clarify *how* it arises in the world; “If I am nothing but the pure nothingness which I have to be, how can this negation reveal a plurality of tasks which are my image?” (p.276) To answer this, we have to remember that the for-itself is not just a future that comes to the present, it also has to be its past in the form of “was”, i.e. “This pure negation which as simple *presence* is not, has its being behind it, as past or facticity.” (p.277)

Combining all of this together, Sartre describes the situation thus; “the negation effects its existence in the mode of reflection-reflecting, as the negation *of the this*, *in order to* escape from the past which it is; it escapes the past *in order to* disengage itself from the *this* by fleeing it in its being toward the future. This is what we shall call the *point of view* which the for-itself has on the world.” (p.277) This is the ekstatic qualification of the negation.

Sartre mentions here that “the meaning of realism, of naturalism, and of materialism lies in the past; these three philosophies are descriptions of the past as if it were present.” (p.277)

Sartre elaborates on this by saying that the “for-itself is then a double flight from the world; it escapes its own being-in-the-midst-of-the-world as a presence to a world which it is fleeing. The possible is the free end of the flight.” (p.277) In this, there is no possibility of surcease from the flight. Our very presence in the world entails the possibility towards which we must project ourselves. Sartre compares this to a donkey drawing a cart behind him and chasing a carrot on a stick which is attached to the cart. The very act of moving forward pushes the carrot beyond its reach. It will always remain before it as an unrealisable end.

The pursuit of our possible is in one sense “void of meaning since the goal is never given but invented and projected proportionately as we run toward it. In another sense we can not refuse to it that meaning which it rejects since in spite of everything possibility is the meaning of the for-itself. Thus there is and there is not a meaning in the flight.” (p.278)

However, while the future confers meaning backwards onto the past it is also prefigured in relation to it. The future is a surpassing of the past (a given in-itself) in order to be its own foundation. “Thus the possible is the lack which the for-itself makes itself be; that is, which is lacking to the present negation in so far as it is a *qualified* negation (a negation which has its quality outside itself in the past). As such the possible is itself qualified…” (p.278).

Sartre examines this in the concrete example of thirst as a three dimensional phenomenon. Thirst is a present flight from an emptiness the for-itself was (as a *given* state in the past). However, it is this very flight which confers on the past state its character of emptiness or lack. The past cannot be lack because it is in-itself what it is. It can only be lacking if it is surpassed toward— by the for-itself. Now, this flight, as a surpassing, is also a flight toward—, and it is this that confers meaning on the flight itself.

The possible that this lack flees toward is “the possibility that it is to be a thirst which would be no longer a lack but a thirst-repletion.” (p.279) It aims to “recover” the given (the thirst as lack) in order that this recovery can provide it with the foundation which would allow it to be its own foundation.

So the possible (or value) is the indication of a thirst which aims to be both a *given* (as it “was it”) and a recovery that allows it to be its own foundation.

Sartre closes this chapter with another summary which I will reproduce in full:

Thus my presence to being which determines it as *this* is a negation of the “this” *in so far as* I am also a *qualified lack beside the "this."* To the extent that my possible is a possible presence to being beyond being, the qualification of my possible reveals a being-beyond-being as the being whose co-presence is a co-presence strictly linked with a repletion to-come. Thus *absence* in the world is revealed as a being to-be-realized in so far as this being is correlative with the possible-being *which l lack*. The glass of water appears as about-to-be-drunk; that is, as the correlate of a thirst grasped non-thetically and its very being as about to be satisfied.

IV. THE TIME OF THE WORLD

The For-itself is temporality and is only consciousness *of* temporality “when it produces itself in the relation “reflective-reflected-on.” In the unreflective mode the for-itself discovers temporality *on* being – that is, outside. Universal temporality is *objective*.” (pp.279-280)

A. The Past

“The “this” does not appear as a present which later will have to become past and which before that was future.” (p.280) The “this”, as in-itself, lacks any kind of relation with temporality, rather it appears to me already in the three temporal dimensions. As a permanence (i.e. essence) it is already in the future (which I am present to as “about-to-come-to-myself”) and was already there in the world (inasmuch as I was already there myself as presence).

What this means is that the thing is not temporal. The in-itself *is* its own past and future (as opposed to having to be them). It is only through the for-itself that the “this” is revealed as being in time; “The For-itself directs the explosion of its temporality against the whole length of the revealed in-itself as though against the length of an immense and monotonous wall… The “this” is revealed temporally… because it is revealed to a revelation of which the very being is temporalization.” (p.280)

So, the in-itself *appears* as temporal because it is “grasped through and in a temporality which temporalizes itself” (p.280) but within this revelation it also appears as atemporal, “it refuses *to be* its own temporality and merely *reflects* time.” (p.280) The way this atemporal/temporal appearance manifests is as permanence, which is apprehended as little in-itself instants slipping by on the surface of an atemporal being.

“In so far then as the For-itself “was” what it is, the instrument or thing appears to it as having been *already* there… [i.e.] the “this” *already was*. Thus the *this* appears as having a past.” (p.281) This past, since it does not appear as a past the in-itself *has to be* (since it is grasped objectively), stands isolated from the present. The result is “the unchangeable *this* is revealed across a flickering and an infinite parcelling out of phantom in-itselfs. This is how that glass or that table is revealed to me. They do not endure; they *are*. Time flows over them.” (p.281)

Sartre considers the objection that things are not “unchangeable”. They do in fact change, only in ways we fail to see. But this is to introduce a scientific view when we are working on the ontological plane. Of course, “thises” reveal themselves across a number of different “profiles”[[14]](#footnote-14) but permanence, as we have seen, is an ontological distinction, a transcendent nothingness apprehended by the for-itself on the in-itself, and as such, “is wholly indifferent to the multiplicity of profiles” (p.281). In short, “thises” are transcendent to temporality not because they don’t change, but because they are in-itself and therefore fundamentally incapable of being temporality. In Sartre’s words, “the transcendent apprehension on the in-itself of the ekstatic unity of the temporalizing For-itself is effected as the apprehension of an empty form of temporal unity without any being which founds that unity *by being it*.” (p.282) This overlaying of temporality by the for-itself on the in-itself doesn’t actually affect or modify being in any way.

Sartre calls this “external temporality”, in which “each before and each after is an “in-itself” isolated from others by its indifferent exteriority, and here these instants are reunited in the unity of one and the same being.” (p.282) So, in universal temporality (‘world’ time) being appears, “not as a transcendence aimed at across time but as a content which passes from instant into instant.” (p.282)

Sartre now turns to, what he calls, *abolitions* and *apparitions*, which are the passing-away and the coming-to-be of “thises”. These “abolitions” and “apparitions” cannot be accounted for by ontology he says and he holds them to be contingent and metaphysical facts. Still, it is within ontology’s power to describe them.

Since the in-itself is what it is, apparition and abolition must “be totally exterior to the in-itself which has appeared or been abolished, for otherwise the in-itself would at the same time both be and not be.” (p.283) In short, the in-itself, unlike the for-itself, cannot affect its own abolition or appearance. In addition, the way the “this” appears related to its own nothingness (the time before its *apparition* and after its *abolishment*) must necessarily manifest as a relation of complete exteriority.

So, regarding the “quasi-before” of apparition, the “quasi-after” of abolition (“quasi” because before and after can only truly exist through a for-itself which *is* temporality (in the mode of not being it)), and the quasi-succession of the two (in which the “this” appears from and is abolished to nothingness); it is “only within the unity of a world and on the ground of a world that there can appear a *this* which *was not* or that there can be revealed that relation-of-absence-of-relation which is exteriority.” (p.283) In short, abolition and apparition can only appear in a *world* and a world can only appear through the For-itself. Abolition and apparition therefore appear “retrospectively” in the world and come to be all at once, with the upsurge of the for-itself. This is, Sartre says, “an original structure of perception.” (p.284)

Sartre also defines causality in the same fashion. Causality is not a “bond of exteriority between two phenomena” (p.284); rather, it is the “first apprehension of the temporality of the “appeared” [in-itself] as an ekstatic mode of being.” (p.284) In this sense, causality is not a scientific relation linking a current state of affairs to a prior one, it appears as the for-itself *interprets* being in accordance with the temporality that it is, that is, by seeing in the in-itself a past in which it was not and from which it came to be.

Causality, in this sense, is pure; it is a consequence of the for-itself perceiving the in-itself. However, as soon as perception occurs, this *interpretative* aspect of the for-itself which we have been calling causality (the “ekstatic constitution of the apparition” (p.284)) “disintegrates into a pure relation of exteriority between the “thises” prior to the “appeared” and the “appeared” itself.” (p.284) This “pure relation of exteriority” is a series of homogenous instants which comprises the past of the world. Sartre summarises this section thus:

By means of its Past, the For-itself founds itself in the In-itself. In the Past the For-itself, now become In-itself, is revealed as being in the midst of the world; it *is*; has lost its transcendence. And due to this fact its being is made past *in* time; there is no difference between the Past of the For-itself and the past of the world which was co-present with it except that the For-itself has to be its own past. Thus there is only *one* Past, which is the past of being or the *objective* Past *in* which I was. My past is past in the world, belonging to the totality of past being, which I am, which I flee. This means that there is a coincidence for one of the temporal dimensions between the ekstatic temporality which I have to be and the time of the world as a pure given nothingness.

B. The Present

The universal present, like the universal past, appears in the world only through the for-itself. We have seen that as an ekstatic unity, the present is presence to being, that is, it *is not*. But the being (in-itself) which appears to this presence, *is*. This is “why the present is given paradoxically as not being at the moment when it is experienced and as being the unique measure of Being in so far as it is revealed as being what it is in the Present.” (p.285)

Being is revealed to the for-itself in the present as being in motion. Sartre holds motion to be like abolition and apparition in that it cannot be *explained* ontologically; rather it must be accepted as a given and described.

Motion is typically described as involving the “permanence of the quiddity”[[15]](#footnote-15) and is therefore “pure change of place affecting a *this* which remains otherwise unaltered” (p.286). Indeed, this seems obvious since if the essence of a thing was altered by motion, what arrived would no longer be the same thing which departed and the idea of motion would lose all meaning.

Again, the idea that motion does not appear as being or a mode of being (i.e. it is a purely external characteristic independent of any essential characteristic of the existent) also supports the principle of the relativity of motion in which “saying that being is in motion and its environment at rest or conversely that the environment is in motion and the being considered is at rest” (p.287) become equivalent.

However, we should not let the fact that an existent appears the same at different positions during its motion overly influence us because these different positions “define the space traversed and not motion itself.” (p.287) It is this intuition which creates the Eleatic paradoxes of motion, which Sartre now sets out to explain.

The Eleatics assert that an arrow in flight passing the point AB, with the tip of the head at A and the end of its tail on B, is exactly the same as if it were in rest at the point AB. “In a word, if motion is an accident of being, motion and rest are indistinguishable.” (p.287) So, Sartre’s goal is to discover what “the being of the moving body [must be] in order for its quiddity to remain unchanged while in its being the moving body is distinct from a being at rest” (p.288).

We might want to say that to *pass* a place is not the same as to *be* there. But then we would be “guilty of serious confusion, for we consider that the moving object only *passes* AB (*i.e.* it never *is* there) and at the same time we continue to take for granted that in itself it *is*.” (p.288) “[H]ow could the arrow *not be* at AB, since at AB it *is*.” (p.288) So, Sartre will deny that “being in motion preserves its being-in-itself.” (p.288)

The location of a thing, we have already explained in terms of spatiality, which was its “relation of exteriority to the ground inasmuch as this relation can collapse into a multiplicity of external relations with other “thises” when the ground itself disintegrates into a multiplicity of figures” (p.288) all apprehended by the For-itself.

So, place (in terms of spatiality) depends on an external relation to other “thises” which make up the ground. However, when a thing is *passing by* a place, those relations of exteriority are in constant flux; “there is “place” in so far as the “this” is revealed as exterior to other “thises.” And there is a *passage* at this place in so far as being is no longer caught up in this exteriority but on the contrary is already exterior to it. Thus motion is the being of a being which is exterior to itself.” (p.289) In saying that being is exterior to its relations of exteriority, Sartre is saying that the in-itself no longer has a coherent relation with the other “thises” which make up the background. It is therefore, in a sense, removed from its own being (as an in-itself which *is* in a place).

“In motion being changes into *nothing* when it passes from A to B.” (p.289) The quality of this being however, doesn’t change, “but its mode of being is changed. This red ball which rolls on the billiard table does not cease *to be* red, but the ball is not this red which it *is* in the same way now as it was the red when at rest. The red remains suspended between abolition and permanence.” (p.289) The red is already at B, so is exterior to what it was at A so it is currently an “annihilation” (abolition), but it will recover itself at C, beyond B, (its final location) meaning that it is also exterior to this very annihilation. “Thus through abolition it escapes being, and through being it escapes abolition.” (p.290)

So, in motion we have discovered a being which *is not* (being-in-motion) but which never becomes nothingness (because it is in-itself). “The only relation which the For-itself can originally apprehend on these *thises* is the relation of exteriority to self” (p.290), however, since the exteriority-to-self is nothing itself, it can only be directly revealed to a For-itself “as the impossibility which exists for certain “thises” simultaneously to be themselves and to be their own nothingness” (p.290). “This nothing which measures and signifies exteriority-to-self is the *trajectory*” (p.290).

Sartre summarises his findings here; “When the *this is at rest,* space *is*; when it is in motion space *is engendered* or *becomes*. The trajectory *never is*, since it is *nothing*; it vanishes immediately into purely external relations between different places; that is, in simple exteriority of indifference or spatiality.” (p.290)

It is the fact that the for-itself (being temporal) can only apprehend motion (as exterior to itself) across a temporal ekstasis, which causes trajectory to reveal itself – “that is, to cause space to arise in the form of an evanescent becoming. By motion space is engendered in time” (p.291).

“The *present* dimension of universal time would… be inapprehensible if there were no motion.” (p.291) Without motion the for-itself could never apprehend itself as presence to being. By way of summary:

Therefore universal time corresponds perfectly to the Present of the For-itself: the exteriority to self of the being which can neither be nor not be returns to the For-itself an image-projected on the level of the In-itself – of a being which has to be what it is not and to not-be what it is. The whole difference lies in that which separates exteriority-to-self – where being is not in order to be its own exteriority, but "is to-be," rather, through the identification of an ekstatic witness – from the pure temporalizing ekstasis where being has to be what it is not.

C. The Future

The original future of the for-itself manifested in the full ekstatic unity of temporality involves a future of the world, which is to say, the future of the in-itself. The basics of this dimension of the world are the same as those for the past and the present so Sartre spends only a little time elaborating these.

Along with the appearance of a world full of “thises” (through the for-itself) a universal future also arises. However, “every future “state” of the world remains strange to it in the full reciprocal exteriority of indifference.” (p.292) These future states are “defined by *chance* and become autonomous probables, which are not probabilized but which *are* as probables, as fully constituted *nows*, with their content well determined but not yet realized. These futures belong to each “this” or collection of “thises,” but they are *outside*.” (pp.292-293)

So what is universal *future*? Sartre identifies it as “the abstract context of that hierarchy of equivalents which are *the* futures, a container of reciprocal exteriorities which is itself exteriority, a sum of in-itselfs which is itself in-itself.” (p.293)

This future can appear in three ways to the for-itself: 1) “as an urgency and a threat in so far as I strictly tie the future of a *this* to its present by the project of my own possibilities” (p.293); 2) as pure exteriority unconnected with my projects; or 3) “as a nothingness in-itself, inasmuch as it is pure dispersion beyond being.” (p.293).

From all we have said thus far, time, if “considered by itself… immediately dissolves into an absolute multiplicity of instants which considered separately lose all temporal nature and are reduced purely and simply to the total atemporality of the *this*. Thus Time is pure nothingness in-itself, which can seem to have a *being* only by the very act in which the For-itself overleaps it in order to utilize it. This being, however, is that of a particular figure which is raised on the undifferentiated ground of time and which we call the *lapse* of time. In fact our first apprehension of objective time is *practical*: it is while *being* my possibilities beyond co-present being that I discover objective time as the worldly correlate of nothingness which separates me from my possible.” (pp.293-294)

Because of this “time is revealed to me as an objective, temporal form… This objective form or *lapse* is like the *trajectory* of my act. Thus time appears through trajectories. But just as spatial trajectories decompose and collapse into pure static spatiality, so the temporal trajectory collapses as soon as it is not simply lived as that which objectively implies our expectation of ourselves. In fact the probables which are revealed to me tend naturally to be isolated as in-itself probables and to occupy a strictly separated fraction of objective time. Then the lapse of time disappears, and time is revealed as the shimmer of nothingness on the surface of a strictly a-temporal being.” (p.294)

V. KNOWLEDGE

With what we have covered thus far, Sartre now wants to draw some conclusions concerning knowledge. He concedes to idealism that knowledge is subjective; “the being of the For-itself is knowledge of being” (p.294) but idealism is wrong in supposing that knowledge is the measure of being.

The important point here is that knowledge arises from the fact that in its being, the For-itself is a relation to being in-itself; in fact, “[k]nowledge is nothing other than the presence of being to the For-itself, and the For-itself is only the nothing which realizes that presence.” (p.295) The relation of the for-itself to the in-itself is a fundamental ontological relation and knowledge (of itself, the world and beings in the world) *is* this relation. “Knowing is an absolute and primitive event; it is the absolute upsurge of the For-itself in the midst of being and beyond being, in terms of the being which it is not and as the negation of that being and a self nihilation. In a word, by a radical reversal of the idealist position, knowledge is reabsorbed in being.” (p.295) Hence, we must ultimately reject the idealist position.

To the realists, Sartre concedes that “it is being which is present to consciousness in knowledge and that the For-itself adds *nothing* to the In-itself except the very fact that *there is* In-itself” (p.296). However, they are wrong to think that I know this being that surrounds me on every side by means of an internal representation; “from this being which “invests me” on every side and from which *nothing* separates me, I am separated precisely by *nothing*; and this nothing because it is nothingness is impassable.” (p.296) But without this negation of being that I am, being could never be realised; “the For-itself is immediate presence to being, and yet at the same time it slips in as an infinite distance between itself and being.” (pp.295-296)

Knowledge is therefore true (Sartre rejects scepticism and relativism) but this truth is necessarily conditioned by the human through which it is revealed.

**Part Three**

**Being-for-Others**

**Chapter One – The Existence of Others**

I. THE PROBLEM

At this point, Sartre points out that we have described human reality as it is for-itself. However, there are other “modes of consciousness which seem, even while themselves remaining strictly in for-itself, to point to a radically different type of ontological structure. This ontological structure is *mine*” (p.301) and refers to a concern I have for-myself. This concern for-myself “reveals to me a being which is *my* being without being-for-me” (p.301), rather, it is for-others.

Sartre highlights this with the emotion of shame. Shame is understandable completely under the structures of the for-itself which we have outlined already; “It is a non-positional self-consciousness, conscious (of) itself as shame… In addition its structure is intentional; it is a shameful apprehension *of* something and this something is *me*.” (p.301)

However, shame “is in its primary structure shame *before somebody*.” (p.302) When I do something embarrassing “I neither judge it nor blame it. I simply live it. I realize it in the mode of for-itself. But now suddenly I raise my head. Somebody was there and has seen me. Suddenly I realize the vulgarity of my gesture, and I am ashamed… [T]he Other is the indispensable mediator between myself and me. I am ashamed of myself *as I appear* to the Other.” (p.302)

Sartre’s point here is that we pass judgement on ourselves as objects precisely because that is how we appear to the Other; as an object. However, appearing as an object to the Other cannot mean simply an “empty image in the mind of another” (p.302) as this could not affect us the way shame does. We might be annoyed that such a “bad portrait of myself” has been apprehended, but we “could not be touched to the quick. Shame is by nature *recognition*. I recognize that I *am* as the Other sees me.” (p.302)

It is this act that establishes me in a new type of being; being-for-others. This being cannot be a part of the for-itself “potentially before the appearance of the Other” because the acts of which I am ashamed are “meanings and as such they surpass the body and at the same time refer to a witness capable of understanding them and to the totality of my human reality.” (pp.302-303) However, at the same time this new being must be in me, not in the Other, because I am responsible for it.

In this chapter, Sartre will proceed to answer two questions; the first concerning the existence of the Other, the second the “relation of my *being* to the being of the Other.” (p.303)

II. THE REEF OF SOLIPSISM

In this section, Sartre discusses the responses of realism and idealism to the problem of solipsism.

Realism cannot forge any connection from one “soul” to another in a way that would allow it to establish the existence of the Other’s “soul”. In realism, knowledge is given through the action of the world upon the mind and the human body is given as a thing in the world separating my mind from other things in the world. Therefore to “see” to another’s mind I must go from my mind to my body, my body to the Other’s body, and finally from his or her body to his or her mind. Realism, basing “its certitude upon the presence “in person” of the spatial-temporal thing in my consciousness” (p.304) can therefore never apprehend the Other’s mind.

It would be futile to argue that the Other’s body ‘points to’ the presence of a human totality because it can only be considered a part of a totality “in so far as it exists in the indissoluble unity of this totality” (p.304). Likewise, on its own, an organ does not ‘point to’ the organism, it can only be considered a part of the totality ‘organism’ *in* the totality of the organism, posited and apprehended first.

At best, realism grants us a *probable* knowledge that the Other exists by asserting that the best interpretation of the behaviour we witness in the body of the Other is that they are the reflections of a consciousness analogous to my own.

In fact, Sartre claims that realism actually must descend into idealism when confronted with the problem of the existence of others. “If the body is a real object really acting on thinking substance, the Other becomes a pure representation, whose *esse* is a simple *percipi*; that is, one whose existence is measured by the knowledge which we have of it.” (p.305)

Sartre criticises idealists (“Kantians”, as he calls them) because “they, preoccupied with establishing the universal laws of subjectivity which are the same for all, never dealt with the question of *persons*.” (p.306)

He rejects the idea that the Other could ever be a noumenal reality; “when I aim at the Other in my daily experience, it is by no means a noumenal reality that I am aiming at… The Other is a phenomenon which refers to other phenomena – to a phenomenon-of-anger which the Other feels toward me…” (pp.306-307).

But Sartre’s real concern here is how these phenomena, organised into a unity and *experienced* by a being which is not me, somehow come to organise and give meaning to phenomena which *I* experience and which are necessarily organised into a unity by me. Under idealism, it is *me* who brings order to my internal representations through the *a priori* application of Kant’s categories and yet somehow, with the Other, we find another being given as organising my experience.

Can we appeal to causality here; i.e. are the phenomena of the Other *causing* my phenomena? Sartre rejects this because “causality has meaning only if it links the phenomena of *one and the same* experience and contributes to constituting that experience.” (p.308) In this case, the anger which the Other feels and the expression which I perceive are phenomena which take place in two completely different experiences. The former occurs in the Other’s experience and the latter in mine. Sartre asks what temporal relation could link these two different phenomena and concludes that an instant of my time cannot be in any kind of temporal relation with an instant in the Other’s time. This is due to Sartre’s insistence that temporality of the for-itself is not universal but rather that “the unifying synthesis of moments [i.e. temporality] is an act of the subject” (p.308) and therefore has meaning only for that subject. In this way “it is not even thinkable that a phenomenon whose reality is strictly relative to its appearance in the Other’s experience should *really* act on a phenomenon of *my experience*.” (p.308)

This is the central problem concerning idealism and the Other for Sartre. “The perception of the Other-as-object refers to a coherent system of representations, and this system *is not mine*.” (p.309) I can attempt to constitute the Other as a concrete object, knowable by me, but “the Other is not a phenomenon which refers to my experience… [rather] on principle he refers himself to phenomena located outside of all experience which is possible for me…. [and consequently if I] strive to determine the concrete nature of this system of representations… I exceed the lawful limits of my knowledge.” (pp.309-310)

One of these phenomena which are outside of my ken is the perception of *me* as an object, for this is how the Other perceives me. Within his or her experiential framework, I appear as a set of phenomena that lie outside of all experience possible for him or her.

In this way, Sartre declares that “the *Other* within the perspective of idealism can be considered neither as a constitutive concept nor as a regulative concept of my knowledge… I construct him as object, and yet he is never released by intuition. I posit him as *subject*, and yet it is as the object of my thoughts that I consider him.” (p.310)

And so, just as in the case of realism, the idealists affirm the existence of the Other but “they can refer only to common sense or to our deep-rooted tendencies to justify their affirmation.” (p.311) Sartre even claims here that idealism, in order to avoid the charge of solipsism, falls back on a realist position by “positing a plurality of closed systems which can communicate only through the outside” (p.311).

Sartre identifies the fatal presupposition in both idealism and realism which fails to adequately free them from solipsism as being the notion that the Other, as a self which is *not* myself, is constituted by an external negation. This happens because the Other appears to me empirically as a body which is “an in-itself external to my body” (p.313) and therefore related to me by a spatial relation. It assumes that the negation contained in the statement “the Other is *not* me” is “the same type as that of the negation contained in the judgment, “The table is not the chair”” (p.313); i.e. the negation that applies to in-itselfs. And “if my relation to the Other must in fact be in the mode of indifferent exteriority, then I can not in my being be affected by either the upsurge or the abolition of the Other any more than an In-itself can be affected by the apparition or the disappearance of another In-itself.” (pp.313-314)

As we already know, such a relation requires a witness (as when I perceive the table and the chair) to be ‘valid’, and this witness could not be related to either myself or the Other by pure exteriority. Rather, it would need to be related to the both of us at the same time by way of an *internal negation*. This, Sartre holds, accounts for the recourse to God in Leibniz. God is that witness who is and is not myself while at the same time is and is not the Other. Sartre suggests that God is able to pull this feat off because he creates us and “in the creative act I look into the very heart of what I create – for what I create is me – and yet what I create opposes itself to me by closing in on itself in an affirmation of objectivity.” (p.314)

It seems more than a little odd to claim that “what I create is me” and Sartre confirms this intuition when he immediately rejects it by saying that after the act of creation God can only be related to me by a relation of exteriority, like a sculptor to a finished statue, hence the God hypothesis fails to solve the problem at all.

III. HUSSERL, HEGEL, HEIDEGGER

In this section, Sartre will consider the approaches to the problems of the Other and solipsism as formulated by three of the greatest influences on his philosophy.

Husserl’s strategy was to claim that the Other is a permanent and indispensable condition for the constitution of a world. Inasmuch as there is a world, this necessarily implies the Other who “is always there as a layer of constitutive meanings which belong to the very object which I consider; in short, he is the veritable guarantee of the object’s objectivity.” (p.316) Since we have already seen that my own self (or Ego) is transcendent, that is to say, it appears outside of me in the world, it too, like all other objects, requires the Other to safeguard it. The result of this is that if I am able to doubt the existence of the Other, then my own existence must also necessarily fall into doubt.

This effort, Sartre feels, is better than previous attempts but ultimately not much different from Kant’s. The reason for this is that “it is not the parallelism of the empirical “Egos” which throws doubt on the person but that of the transcendental subjects.” (p.317) Husserl tries to ‘prove’ the existence of the Other by proving the existence of the Ego of the Other, but “the Other is *never* that empirical person who is encountered in my experience; he is the transcendental subject to whom this person by nature refers.” (p.317) Husserl’s focus on the world and the transcendental necessarily limits the scope of his enquiry to what can appear in the world. Of course, the apprehension of an empirical Ego *implies* a subject, but with this, we haven’t made any significant improvements over Kant.

In addition, since Husserl is limited to the world (of transcendental objects), he can only measure the being of the Other by the knowledge he has of him or her, whereas we have seen that knowledge can only arise from being, never the other way around. And moreover, even if knowledge *could* measure being, the only knowledge I could obtain is that of the Other as object for me, when to apprehend his or her being, I need to obtain that knowledge the Other has of him or herself.

Sartre summarises this section on Husserl thus: “Husserl replies to the solipsist that the Other's existence is as sure as that of the world, and Husserl includes in the world my psycho-physical existence. But the solipsist says the same thing: it is as sure, he will say, but no more sure. The existence of the world is measured, he will add, by the knowledge which I have of it; the case will not be otherwise for the existence of the Other.”

Hegel, on the other hand, sees the Other as “indispensable not to the constitution of the world and of my empirical “Ego” but to the very existence of my consciousness as self-consciousness.” (p.319) For Hegel, the self-consciousness is first pure self-identity, “Myself = Myself” or “I am I”, and therefore has complete certitude of itself but lacks truth, which could only be obtained in a relationship between subject and object. The first syncretic relation is between a subject and object but the object is not objectified since it is the subject itself, hence “the impulse of this consciousness is to realize its concept by becoming conscious of itself in all respects… [by] making the “I am I” explicit and producing itself as an object in order to attain the ultimate stage of development.” (p.319) The Other takes on the role of mediator between my self-consciousness and other self-consciousnesses (*in general*) because it is only through the Other that the “I am I” can become objectified.

What this means is that it is only in the apprehension of the Other that the *cogito* can first appear; “the existence of the Other renders the *cogito* possible as the abstract moment when the self is apprehended as an object. Thus the “moment” which Hegel calls *being for the Other* is a necessary stage in the development of self-consciousness; the road of interiority passes through the Other.” (p.320)

So, there is something of a symbiosis here; the “value of the Other’s recognition of me depends on the value of my recognition of the Other.” (p.320) However, there is also a conflict involved because as “the Other apprehends me as bound to a body and immersed in *life*, I am myself only an Other.” (p.320) Here, when Sartre says “immersed in *life*”, he means being an object for a subject (the Other), hence to be an Other myself.

Now, if I am a mere object, I can’t achieve the impulse of consciousness which is to become aware of myself as consciousness, so in order to do this, I must “risk my own life”, which means revealing that I am, in fact, not merely an object, I cannot be determined in my existence, I am not bound to life (which, in this case, seems to mean something like the external “world”). To do this, I actually need to reduce the Other to nothing more than other; i.e. “cause myself to be mediated by an Other who is only other – that is, by a dependent consciousness whose essential characteristic is to exist only for another.” (p.321) This, Sartre calls pursuing the *death* of the Other and is accomplished precisely when I “risk my life” and demonstrate that I am more than an object “immersed in *life*”.

This is the origin of the Master and Slave relationship. The Other is the Slave and I am the Master; “he remains bound to external things in general; he appears to me and he appears to himself as *non-essential*.” (p.321) In the sense that the Slave is the object pole and the Master the subject pole in this relationship, and a subject-object relationship like this allows *truth* to be ascertained, we can say that “the Slave is the Truth of the Master.” (p.321)

The problem with this formulation is that the Other, as *non-essential*, objectified consciousness, cannot provide absolute truth precisely because he is *non-essential*. “In order to attain this truth there is necessary “a moment in which the master does for himself what he does as regards the Other and when the slave does as regards the Other what he does for himself.” (p.321) At this moment (which I think makes sense to call a ‘dialectical synthesis’) a self-consciousness *in general* arises which is recognised in other self-consciousnesses and is identical with them and itself, in other words, the Absolute.

Even though Hegel has moved the discussion to being, Sartre insists that he has still formulated it in terms of knowledge. Hegel is still trying to obtain certitude via *truth*, which necessarily involves the positing of an object for a subject (i.e. on the level of reflection). Sartre sums Hegel’s position as saying “if there is in truth a Me for whom the *Other* is an object, this is because there is an *Other* for whom the Me is object.” (p.322) Absolute being and knowledge for Hegel (as for idealism) are identical, whereas for Sartre, being necessarily exists prior to any reflective intuition which can yield epistemological truth.

Sartre groups the problems that result from equating being and knowledge into two categories: epistemological optimism and ontological optimism.

Hegel’s epistemological optimism manifests in his belief that “the *truth* of self-consciousness can appear; that is, that an objective agreement can be realized between consciousnesses – by authority of the Other’s recognition of me and my recognition of the Other.” (p.324) But since Hegel’s philosophy turns on truth, that is, objectivity, Sartre asks, “Is “to appear as an object for a consciousness” still “to be consciousness”?” (p.326) He says no; “the *for-itself* as for-itself can not be known by the Other. The object which I apprehend under the name of the Other appears to me in a radically *other* form. The Other is not a *for-itself* as he appears to me…” (p.327) In other words, the Other as object is completely different from the Other as subject. In this case, it is impossible to “establish a universal concept subsuming under the name of self-consciousness, my *consciousness* for myself and (of) myself and my *knowledge* of the Other” (p.327).

In addition, Hegel requires that, even as I apprehend the Other as an object, I also apprehend myself as an object in the Other. Since we have already seen above that apprehending the Other as object necessarily precludes me apprehending him or her as subject, there is no way I can see myself as an object from the perspective of the Other as this would involve seeing the other in his or her subjectivity.

With regard to the charge of ontological optimism, Sartre notes that Hegel’s truth is the truth of the Whole and “he places himself at the vantage point of truth – *i.e.,* of the Whole – to consider the problem of the Other.” (p.328) In other words, Hegel can look down on the relation between consciousnesses of others and view them as a particular type of object – the subject-object. But this ‘God’s eye view’ can never solve the problem of the relation between his consciousness and the Other because he is no longer a consciousness. He has placed himself outside the relation he is supposed to be studying.

Heidegger gets off to a good start by declaring that the being of human reality is being-with. For Heidegger then, since “I discover the transcendental relation to the Other as constituting my own being” (p.330), the problem of the Other is a false problem. With all of the other philosophers we have looked at, the relation between consciousnesses was one in which the Other appeared to me on an ontic level “appearing in the midst of the world among “instruments” as a type of particular object.” (p.331) Rather, for Heidegger, “I do not exist *first* in order that subsequently a contingency should make me *encounter* the Other. The question here is of an essential structure of my being.” (p.330)

There are two modes of being-with for Heidegger. The first (and original mode) is the inauthentic and anonymous mode of the “they” which “reveals to me my “being-with,” not as the relation of one unique personality with other personalities equally unique… but as a total interchangeability of the terms of the relation… I am not “me”; instead we have the social unity of the *they*.” (p.332) The second (a mode which has to be earned or achieved) is the authentic mode and emerges with the making of a resolute decision in which I reach out towards death as my ultimate possibility. In this mode others stand to be raised to authenticity along with the individual.

The important point for Sartre here is that “Heidegger’s being-with is not the clear and distinct position of an individual confronting another individual; it is not *knowledge*. It is the mute existence in common of one member of the crew with his fellows” (p.332).

Sartre’s first problem with Heidegger’s solution is that he has simply substituted “being-for” with “being-with” without founding it in anything. Fine, the being of human reality is being-with, but Sartre complains that “it is precisely this co-existence which must be explained. Why does it become the unique foundation of our being?” (p.333)

In addition, with being-with, Heidegger has given us the ontological structure of human reality but, even if this affirmation were proven, it “can in no way serve as a foundation to an ontic being-with… The Other in the relation “with,” taken on the ontological level, can not in fact be concretely determined” (p.334). What Sartre means by this is that “being-with” as an ontological structure is a general feature of human reality that cannot ground actual, concrete “relations-with”, such as my friendship with Pierre or my romantic relationship with Annie; “it does not contain the power of becoming *that* Other – Pierre or Annie.” (p.334)

Sartre also points out that Heidegger hasn’t explained, and it is quite possibly inexplicable, exactly *how* “being-with causes another human reality to rise up.” (p.334) Human reality is its own possibilities, but this includes the Other as well, who must also be his or her own possibilities and is in the world with me. It is this particular instance of human reality that Heidegger hasn’t addressed.

Sartre concludes this section by outlining four “necessary and sufficient conditions under which a theory of the existence of others can be valid.” (p.337)

1. A *proof* of the existence of others is impossible. “The Other’s existence will always be subject to doubt” (p.337). This is because the Other’s existence cannot be a *probability*. “Probability can concern only objects which appear in our experience… Thus since the Other on principle and in its “For-itself” is outside my experience, the probability of his existence as *Another Self* can never be either validated or invalidated” (p.337).

Conjecture about the existence of the Other is therefore completely lacking in meaning. “But if I do not conjecture about the Other, then, precisely, I affirm him.” (p.338) Sartre claims we are certain that the Other exists, “I have always had a total though implicit *comprehension* of his existence” (p.338), although this comprehension is “pre-ontological” which means that it “comprises a surer and deeper understanding of the nature of the Other and the relation of his being to my being than all the theories which have been built around it.” (p.338)

Any ‘theory’ about the existence of the Other must therefore simply make explicit this certain pre-ontological comprehension without trying to ‘prove’ anything and it can only do this by “simply question[ing] me in my being… [to] make clear and precise the meaning of that affirmation” (p.338).

1. We must take the *cogito* as our point of departure. Through consciousness we must aim to throw ourselves outside onto the Other, “and this must be done not by revealing to me an *a priori* structure of myself which would point toward an equally *a priori* Other but by disclosing to me the concrete, indubitable presence of a particular, concrete Other” (p.338).
2. The Other must not be revealed as an object.
3. We must not apprehend the Other qua Other by way of an external negation which would “separate the Other from myself as one substance from another substance – and in this case all apprehension of the Other is by definition impossible” (p.339). Rather, it must be by internal negation, that is, “a synthetic, active connection of the two terms, each one of which constitutes itself by denying that it is the other.” (p.339)

IV. THE LOOK

There is no doubt for Sartre that other people are objects for me; “Thus it is true that at least one of the modalities of the Other’s presence to me is *object-ness*.” (p.340) However, if this “relation of object-ness is the fundamental relation between the Other and myself, then the Other’s existence remains purely conjectural.” (p.340) If we are to apprehend the Other as something more than a probable object, he or she must manifest “in some other way than through the knowledge which I have of him.” (p.340)

Sartre holds that this perception of the Other, by its very nature, refers to a “primary relation between my consciousness and the Other’s.” (p.341) It is this relation, “in which the Other must be given to me directly as a subject” (p.341), which is the fundamental relation of being-for-others.

Sartre uses the example of seeing a man in a park. If I were to apprehend him as just another external object, I would perceive him as being connected with all of the other “thises” around him via relations of pure exteriority. He could disappear and the relations of the other objects around him would remain unchanged, fixed in their pure exteriority, “grouped and synthesized *from my point of view* into instrumental complexes” (p.341), however, when we perceive him as a *man*, we “register an organization *without distance* of the things in my universe around that privileged object.” (p.341) The “without distance” refers to the fact that distance, as we have seen, is a relation of spatiality which only appears between “thises” discovered in a world; between a for-itself and the world of in-itselfs, there is no distance, they are instead linked by an internal relation of negation. As Sartre says; “the lawn remains two yards and twenty inches away from him, but it is also *as a lawn* bound to him in a relation which at once both transcends distance and contains it.” (pp.341-342) What we see between the man and the lawn is “a relation which is without *parts*, given at one stroke, inside of which there unfolds a spatiality which is not *my* spatiality; for instead of a grouping *toward me* of the objects, there is now an orientation *which flees from me*.” (p.342)

The Other appears as a “*disintegration* of the relations which I apprehend between the objects of my universe.” (p.342) Suddenly the objects-in-the-midst-of-the-world which, previously referred to me and only me, now refer to another ‘special’ object, who disintegrates those relations I had.

So, what can we note about this Other? Well, first, as we have seen, the Other is “the permanent flight of things toward a goal which I apprehend as an object at a certain distance from me but which escapes me inasmuch as it unfolds about itself its own distances.” (p.343)

However, it doesn’t stop there. Sartre points out that it is not just one object that the Other shares a distance-creating relation with, rather “there is a total space which is grouped around the Other, and this space is made *with my space*” (p.343). In addition, the qualities of the objects all become qualities existing for him; “The grass is something qualified; it is *this* green grass which exists for the Other” (p.343). Sartre continues to colourfully describe this upsurge in terms of conflict and loss; “suddenly an object has appeared which has stolen the world from me… The appearance of the Other in the world corresponds therefore to a fixed sliding of the whole universe, to a decentralization of the world which undermines the centralization which I am simultaneously effecting… Rather it appears that the world has a kind of drain hole in the middle of its being and that it is perpetually flowing off through this hole.” (p.343)

Despite this, the Other is still an object for me. But if “the Other-as-object is defined in connection with the world as the object which sees what I see, then my fundamental connection with the Other-as-subject must be able to be referred back to my permanent possibility of *being seen* by the Other. It is in and through the revelation of my being-as-object for the Other that I must be able to apprehend the presence of his being-as-subject.” (pp.344-345) Sartre goes even further than this though; “my apprehension of the Other in the world as *probably being* a man refers to my permanent possibility of *being-seen-by-him*… “Being-seen-by-the-Other” is the *truth* of “seeing-the-Other.” Thus the notion of the Other can not under any circumstances aim at a solitary, extra-mundane consciousness which I can not even think.” (p.345)

Switching from my perspective to the perspective of the Other gives us the Other as the *one who is looking at me*. In this case we must be able to explain the meaning of this look.

The first thing Sartre notes is that we usually apprehend the look as coming from the eyes of the Other but this need not necessarily be the case. The look “will be given just as well on occasion when there is a rustling of branches, or the sound of a footstep followed by silence…” (p.346) Neither is the look “one quality among others of the object which functions as an eye… far from perceiving the look *on* the objects which manifest it, my apprehension of a look turned toward me appears on the ground of the destruction of the eyes which “look at me.” If I apprehend the look, I cease to perceive the eyes… they are neutralized, put out of play…” (p.346).

Sartre explains how the “illusion” that the Other seems to go in front of his eyes arises by pointing out that “the eyes as objects of my perception remain at a precise distance which unfolds from me to them… whereas the look is upon me without distance [because it is created by the Other-as-subject] while at the same time it holds me at a distance – that is, its immediate presence to me unfolds a distance which removes me from it. I can not therefore direct my attention on the look without at the same stroke causing my perception to decompose and pass into the background [as an object for the Other-as-subject]” (p.347)

When we are looked at, we are no longer conscious of looking ourselves, rather we are conscious of *being looked at*. This is so central for Sartre that he says “we can not perceive the world and at the same time apprehend a look fastened upon us; it must be either one or the other.” (p.347) The look is a pure reference to myself.

Sartre now turns to investigate what the look is; what *being seen* means for me.

Imagine that I am jealous and listening at a closed door or peeking through a keyhole. As a non-thetic self-consciousness “there is no self to inhabit my consciousness… [my acts] are in no way *known*; I *am my acts*… I am a pure consciousness *of* things, and things, caught up in the circuit of my selfness, offer to me their potentialities as the proof of my non-thetic consciousness (of) my own possibilities.” (p.347) The instrumental-complex around me (the “ensemble”) is totally oriented (transcended) towards the project of my possibilities (i.e. my jealousy). So “the keyhole is given as “to be looked through close by and a little to one side,” *etc*.” (p.348) “This ensemble in the world with its double and inverted determination (there is a spectacle to be seen behind the door only because I am jealous, but my jealousy is nothing except the simple objective fact that *there is* a sight *to be seen* behind the door) – this we shall call *situation*.” (p.348)

On a slight tangent which is nevertheless worth repeating here, Sartre goes on to reinforce what he has already outlined previously;

I can not truly define myself as *being* in a situation: first because I am not a positional consciousness of myself; second because I am my own nothingness. In this sense – and since I am what I am not and since I am not what I am – I can not even define myself as truly *being* in the process of listening at doors. I escape this provisional definition of myself by means of all my transcendence. There as we have seen is the origin of bad faith. Thus not only am I unable to *know* myself, but my very being escapes – although I *am* that very escape from my being – and I am absolutely nothing. There is nothing *there* but a pure nothingness encircling a certain objective ensemble and throwing it into relief outlined upon the world, but this ensemble is a real system, a disposition of means in view of an end.

But suddenly I hear footsteps in the hall. I am being looked at. What happens?

“First of all, I now exist as *myself* for my unreflective consciousness.” (p.349) Previously, the unreflective lacked a self because the self “was given in the form of an object and only for the reflective consciousness. But here the self comes to haunt the unreflective consciousness. Now the unreflective consciousness is a consciousness *of* the world.” (p.349)

The difference between the self I apprehend while in the unreflective state (upon being seen by the Other) and the self given to me in reflection is that the former “does not apprehend the *person* directly or as *its* object; [rather] the person is presented to consciousness *in so far as the person is an object for the Other*. This means that all of a sudden I am conscious of myself as escaping myself, not in that I am the foundation of my own nothingness but in that I have my foundation outside myself. I am for myself only as I am a pure reference to the Other.” (p.349)

It is important to note that the Ego (person) I apprehend here is not apprehended as being for me, it is not *my* object. And precisely because the Other is looking at me as a subject, I cannot apprehend him or her as an object either. This Ego which appears in the world is an object for the Other. However, even though this Ego does not belong to me “I *am that Ego*; I do not reject it as a strange image, but it is present to me as a self which I *am* without *knowing* it” (p.350). I discover it in shame or pride and other similar emotions, “which makes me *live*, not *know* the situation of being looked at.” (p.350)

So, “originally the bond between my unreflective consciousness and my *Ego*, which is being looked at, is a bond not of knowing but of being.” (p.350) In addition, “this self which I am – this I am in a world which the Other has made alien to me, for the Other’s look embraces my being and correlatively the walls, the door, the keyhole. All these instrumental-things, in the midst of which I am, now turn toward the Other a face which on principle escapes me. Thus I am my *Ego* for the Other in the midst of a world which flows toward the Other. Earlier we were able to call this internal hemorrhage the flow of *my* world toward the Other-as-object… Here on the contrary the flight is without limit; it is lost externally; the world flows out of the world and I flow outside myself.” (p.350)

Sartre now wants to investigate what sort of relations I can have with this “being which I am and which shame reveals to me” (p.350).

First of all there is a relation of being here. “I *am* this being… my shame is a confession… [however] I am this being, neither in the mode of “having to be” nor in that of “was”; I do not found it in its being; I can not produce it directly.” (pp.350-351)

In addition, this “being which I am preserves a certain indetermination, a certain unpredictability” (p.351), not just because I cannot *know* the Other but also because the Other is free. In Sartre’s words, “the Other’s freedom is revealed to me across the uneasy indetermination of the being which I am for him.” (p.351) Sartre talks about this situation “as if I had a dimension of being from which I was separated by a radical nothingness; and this nothingness is the Other’s freedom.” (p.351) The Other creates this being, my being-for-him, out of his own freedom.

One surprising feature of this being is that “I *am* this being, not in the mode of “was” or of “having to be” but *in-itself*… It is not for myself, to be sure… I shall remain forever a consciousness. But it is for the Other.” (pp.351-352) For the Other I am this being in the same way this table is a table. Sartre describes it thus; “my transcendence becomes for whoever makes himself a witness of it (*i.e.*, determines himself *as not being* my transcendence) a purely established transcendence, a given-transcendence” (p.352).

The Other accomplishes this feat, not through any special act but simply through his or her being; “without his acting upon me in any way except by the pure upsurge of his being – then I have an outside, I have a *nature*. My original fall is the existence of the Other.” (p.352)

Naturally this affects my possibilities. The Other solidifies and alienates me from my possibilities. These possibilities which I *am* now appear as “given also to another, given as about to be transcended in turn by his own possibilities. The Other as a look is only that – my transcendence transcended.” (p.352) My possibilities are still *mine* and I am a non-thetic consciousness (of) them but now they are alienated from me, subsumed under a new grouping of possibilities. I still grasp them thetically as potentialities of instruments belonging to a *situation*, but now, under the Other’s look, a new organisation of complexes arise on *my* instruments as if from nowhere.

Sartre talks about the world of instruments around me disappearing from me, escaping me. This chair is no longer *mine*, it “escapes me so as to organize itself into a new and differently oriented complex – with other relations and other distances in the midst of other objects which similarly have for me a secret face.” (p.353)

As an example, Sartre talks about a dark corner which formerly had the potentiality for my possibility of hiding in but this active and alive possibility has now become a given possibility subsumed by the Other’s possibility of illuminating it with his flashlight. “I apprehend it through my anguish and through my decision to give up that hiding place which is *“too risky.”*” (p.353) My possibilities are only present to me inasmuch as they have been transcended by the Other’s freedom.

Sartre defines instrumentality as “being able to be surpassed toward—” but this means that my possibilities themselves become instrumentalities for the Other. “My possibility of hiding in the corner becomes the fact that the Other can surpass it toward his possibility of pulling me out of concealment, of identifying me, of arresting me.” (p.354) Insofar as “I am the instrument of possibilities which are not my possibilities… [possibilities] which deny my transcendence in order to constitute me as a means to ends of which I am ignorant – I am *in danger*.” (p.358)

Sartre notes two consequences of this. First, “my possibility becomes a *probability* which is outside me.” (p.354) For me, ‘hiding in the corner and escaping notice’ is still my possibility, but it can now be transcended by another and become ‘hiding in the corner and being discovered’. My former free and certain possibility has become a contingent in-itself whose successful realisation is no longer up to me.

Second, “the ensemble “instrument-possibility,” made up of myself confronting the instrument, appears to me as surpassed and organized into a world by the Other… *I am no longer master of the situation*.” (p.355)

Of course, even when I am alone my actions don’t always produce the consequences I expect or desire (Sartre’s example is pulling a platform towards me and knocking off a vase which was on it) but “there is nothing which I could not have foreseen if I had been more careful” (p.355). With the upsurge of the Other there is something which fundamentally and on principle escapes me and which is outside my control.

We have already seen that being-looked-at confers spatiality on me; “To apprehend oneself as looked-at is to apprehend oneself as a spatializing-spatialized.” (p.357), but the Other’s look is also *temporalising*. Sartre embarks here on a discussion about *simultaneity*. Simultaneity is “the temporal connection of two existents which are not bound by any other relation.” (p.357) According to this definition a single for-itself can never apprehend simultaneity because no two existents are capable of sharing a temporal connection free from any other relation. Rather they must always be temporalised by the temporalising for-itself and, appearing to him or her as a part of his or her world, they can only be co-presences. “Simultaneity therefore does not belong to the existents of the world; it supposes the co-presence to the world of two presents considered as *presences-to*… the original phenomenon of simultaneity is the fact that this glass is for Paul *at the same time* that it is for me.” (p.357) Simultaneity requires the Other.

Finally, this *Ego* which I am under the look of the Other is the “object of values which come to qualify me without my being able to act on this qualification or even to know it” (p.358). Sartre calls this being *enslaved*, saying we are ““slaves” in so far as we appear to the Other.” (p.358)

Sartre summarises this section thus:

We have only made explicit the meaning of those subjective reactions to the Other’s look which are fear (the feeling of being in danger before the Other’s freedom), pride, or shame (the feeling of being finally what I am but elsewhere, over there for the Other), the recognition of my slavery (the feeling of the alienation of all my possibilities).

Thus the appearance of the look is apprehended by me as the upsurge of an ekstatic relation of being, of which one term is the “me” as for-itself which is what it is not and which is not what it is, and of which the other term is still the “me” but outside my reach outside my action, outside my knowledge.

This has covered what the Other’s look has *revealed* to me; Sartre will now investigate what “the Other manifests as *unrevealable*” (p.360)

The Other’s look (a look-looking not a look-looked-at) destroys all objectivity for me inasmuch as it renders me an object in a world filled with other objects. It also destroys my distances inasmuch as it spatialises itself with regard to me. In fixing my possibilities the Other reveals to me the impossibility of being an object for myself and simultaneously reveals his or her infinite freedom.

Sartre uses this to explain why something which we happily do of our own free will becomes an annoyance if we are told to do it. It is because the latter “cause us to experience the Other’s freedom across our own slavery.” (p.362)

All we have discussed thus far lets us see why we so strongly resist the solipsistic argument even when we have no “proof” of its falsity. It is precisely because “the Other is given to me as a concrete evident presence which I can in no way derive from myself and which can in no way be placed in doubt” (pp.362-363). In line with this Sartre says that “certain particular consciousnesses – for example, “shame-consciousness” – bear indubitable witness to the *cogito* both of themselves and of the existence of the Other.” (pp.364-365)

Someone might object that the Other’s look is just the *meaning* of my objectivity-for-myself. This meaning we then project outside ourselves and hypostatise as the Other.

Sartre meets this objection with two points:

1. My object-ness is not a relation of identity. I am not the me-object; “In fact the notion of *objectivity*… requires an explicit negation. The object is that which is not my consciousness… Thus the Me-as-object-for-myself is a Me which *is not* Me… It is a *degraded* consciousness” (p.365).

Sartre gives the example of trying to apprehend myself as evil. I could never do it because, in the first place, “I *am* not evil any more than I *am* a civil servant or a physician” (p.365), that is, I cannot be an evil-*thing*, in-itself. Second, “if I were *to be* evil for myself, I should of necessity be so in the mode of *having* to be so and would have to apprehend myself and will myself as evil.” (p.365) But if I *have to* willmyself as evil, this must mean that I am good (if I was just evil, I wouldn’t have to will myself to be evil), meaning that I “have to approve myself [as evil] by the same act [willing myself to be evil] which makes me blame myself [for being good].” (p.366)

Further, I cannot detach myself from myself to make of myself an object because “I *am* my own detachment. I *am* my own nothingness… I can not *be* this nothingness which separates me from me-as-object, for there must of necessity be a *presentation* to me of the object which I am.” (p.366) In other words, I need a mediator to create an object of myself, I cannot do it by myself.

1. As we have seen, “the Other does not constitute me as an object for myself but *for him*.” (p.367) The me-as-object doesn’t “appear” to me. “I apprehend nothing but an escape from myself toward—” (p.367) I never “know” myself as object, rather I apprehend it in “uneasiness” as a stranger whom I nevertheless “accept the responsibility for.” (p.366)

Sartre now asks if the fact that we can be mistaken about whether we are being-looked-at or not should affect our certainty of the existence of the Other as the one looking. For sure, perhaps what I took as the look of the Other was merely the wind rustling the bushes behind me. “In this case what becomes of my certainty that *I am looked-at?* My shame was in fact *shame before somebody*. But nobody is there. Does it not thereby become *shame before nobody?*” (p.368)

The look “reveals to me only the Other-as-subject… [and] it is impossible to transfer my certainty of the Other-as-subject to the Other-as-object” (pp.368-369). It is therefore also impossible for the *probability* of the Other-as-object (all objects in the world can be nothing more than probable for Sartre) to erode our certainty of the Other-as-subject. In addition, we have already seen how the look “appears on the ground of the destruction of the object which manifests it… The fact of being-looked-at can not therefore *depend* on the object which manifests the look.” (p.369)

However, the objector continues, this hasn’t really addressed the problem; you can still discover that you are mistaken about being-looked-at. I hear a footstep and turn around but it was a false alarm; there is no one there. I am not looked-at and there is no Other.

In answer to this example, Sartre denies that my being-as-object for the Other has been shown to be in error. As far the existence of the Other is concerned, it “is so far from being placed in doubt that this false alarm can very well result in making me give up my enterprise… Better yet, if I tremble at the slightest noise, if each creak announces to me a look, this is because I am already in the state of being-looked-at.” (p.370)

The false alarm did not signal an error in my apprehending the Other-as-subject, rather that which falsely appeared was the “Other’s *facticity*; that is, the contingent connection between the Other and an object-being in *my* world. Thus what is doubtful is not the Other himself. It is the Other’s *being-there*” (p.370).

This means that the Other’s presence in the world cannot be derived from the Other’s presence as a subject because this presence is transcendent, i.e. “being-beyond-the-world” (p.370) and provokes Sartre into a discussion about absence and presence as related to the Other.

Absence is not any kind of “not-being-there”. I don’t say that my pen is “absent” when I notice that it is not where I left it. “This is because the place of a material *object* or of an instrument, even though sometimes it may be precisely assigned, does not derive from the nature of the object or instrument.” (p.370) It is only through human reality that a *place* can come to objects. So, “[h]uman reality alone, in so far as it is its own possibilities, can originally take a place.” (pp.370-371)

But a particular human-reality can only come to have a relation to a *place* if it has itself created such a relation. So, I would not say that Albert Camus is absent from my room because he has never been here and has no relation with my room. Absence is therefore “a mode of being of human-reality in relation to locations and places which it has itself determined by its presence” and since we have already seen that *place* is not determined “by the site nor even by the solitary relations of the location to [the individual] himself, but by the presence of other human-realities[,] it is in relation to *other* people that [the individual] is absent.” (p.371) In short, absence “is a bond between human-realities, not between human-reality and the world.” (p.371)

If Pierre is absent from a place, it can only be “in relation to *other* people that Pierre is absent. Absence is Pierre’s concrete mode of being in relation to Therese…” (p.371) In this way, for “Pierre to be absent in relation to Therese is a particular way of his being present.” (p.371) Absence is predicated on a relation of original presence, a relation which obviously has nothing to do with *spatiality*, that is, distance. In the same way, Pierre’s presence to me, in the sense of being here in this room, can only make sense if he is present to me in a more fundamental manner, *present* in my world as a concern or something I am interested in. “Thus the empirical concepts of absence and of presence are two specifications of a fundamental presence of Pierre to Therese and of Therese to Pierre. They are only different ways of expressing the presence and have meaning only through it.” (p.372)

This is the case because being *situated* has nothing to do with being in the same room or within line of sight. We are situated in a human space which Sartre calls the “hodological” space and which the translator of *Being and Nothingness*, Hazel E. Barnes, refers to as a “map or spatial organization of our environment in terms of our acts and needs.” (p.372)

Sartre goes on to generalise this notion of “original presence” on which one can be situated beyond ‘Others’ whom we know. “I am situated also as a European in relation to Asiatics, or to Negroes, as an old man in relation to the young… In short it is in relation to every living man that every human reality is present or absent on the ground of an original presence.” (p.373) What this tells us is that “[t]his “original presence” can have meaning only as a being-looked-at or as a being-looking-at; that is, according to whether the Other is an object for me or whether I myself am an object-for-the-Other.” (p.373)

The point is that being-for-Others is not something which only surfaces when the Other is physically looking at us or we are looking at him or her. It is a constant fact of human reality and it pervades every thought or deed we engage in. “Hence I can indeed be mistaken concerning the empirical presence of an Other-as-object whom I happen to encounter on my path. I can indeed believe that it is Annie who is coming toward me on the road and discover that it is an unknown person; the fundamental presence of Annie to me is not thereby changed. I can indeed believe that it is a man who is watching me in the half light and discover that it is a trunk of a tree which I took for a human being; my fundamental presence to all men, the presence of all men to myself is not thereby altered. For the appearance of a man as an object in the field of my experience is not what informs me that there are men. My certainty of the Other's existence is independent of these experiences and is, on the contrary, that which makes them possible.” (p.373)

So, what we can be certain of is that the Other-as-object exists as the correlative to my being-as-subject but we can never be certain that the Other-as-object is *that* particular object. Likewise, the Other-as-subject is a certitude but we can never be certain that I have been detached from the ground of the world as *this*.

Another point Sartre raises here is that “this look is not given in the form of plurality” (p.374) because plurality belongs only to objects. When I am looked-at I find myself in the presence of an unnumbered reality. Of course, we can in turn look at those unnumbered *other* consciousnesses and isolate them in their multiplicity, but as soon as we turn away they dissolve back into an irresolvable, “infinite” presence. The Other looking at me is “prenumerical” because “numbering supposes an external witness and is the pure and simple establishment of exteriority.” (p.379)

Sartre gives the example of delivering a lecture. While I am speaking, I am in the presence of the look but “the Other’s presence remains undifferentiated” (p.375). There is no collective consciousness nor is there a plural look; rather I feel an “intangible reality, fleeting and omnipresent” (p.375). If I direct my look toward the audience “I shall suddenly see heads and eyes appear. When objectivized the prenumerical reality of the Other is decomposed and pluralized. But the look has disappeared as well.” (p.375) Sartre calls this anonymous, prenumerical reality, “they”; “The *they* can never be apprehended as an object, for it immediately disintegrates.” (p.376)

Now, Sartre wants to examine the relation of the Me to the Other; i.e. what is the *being* of this being-for-others?

The first thing to note is that being-for-Others is not an ontological structure of the for-itself; rather “our being along with its being-for-itself is also for-others; the being which is revealed to the reflective consciousness is for-itself-for-others.” (p.376) Since being-for-Others arises with the upsurge of the for-itself, it is “at once an historization – for I temporalize myself as presence to others – and a condition of all history, we shall call it a prehistoric historization.” (p.376)

We have already seen that the relation of the for-itself to the in-itself rested on an internal negation where the for-itself has to be as not being *this* being. This negation then binds the for-itself to the being it is not. Sartre says these observations can be applied to the relation between the for-itself and the Other as well. For the Other to be, I must be the one who is not the Other; “the For-itself as itself includes the being of the Other in its being in so far as its being is in question as not being the Other.” (p.377)

We must remember that the for-itself does not *give* being to the Other, it simply “gives to the Other its being-other” (p.378) and it is this not-being-the-Other in the nihilating mode of “reflection-reflecting”. As always, the for-itself does what it does, *as nothing*, because if it ever became something, it would be ensnared by the Other and lose its relation with the Other, disappearing “at the heart of a total undifferentiation.” (p.378)

There is a fundamental difference between the relations between the for-itself and being and the for-itself and the Other though. The relation with the in-itself was not reciprocal because the in-itself was pure being. The for-itself differed from the in-itself in its mode of being. The Other, however, as consciousness, shares the same mode of being as me and inasmuch as I have to not-be the Other, the Other also has to not-be me. “The Other exists for consciousness only as *a refused self*. But precisely because the Other is a self, he can himself be refused for and through me only in so far as it is his self *which refuses me*… Not only do I make myself not-be this other being by denying that he is me, I make myself not-be a being who is making himself not-be me.” (p.379)

This double negation is destructive or perhaps a better term is “unstable”. Only one of us can ‘win’. Either I make myself not-be her and she becomes an object for me or vice versa. Now, if it is the case that I can be the negation of the Other, it means that the Other has already been revealed to me as Other, i.e. she has already made me an object for her. So, “[w]hat I refuse to be can be nothing but this refusal to be the Me by means of which the Other is making me an object. Or, if you prefer, I refuse my refused Me” (p.379).

All of this means that I can’t posit the Other-as-object without affirming the existence of my Self-for-others at the same time; “I escape the Other by leaving him with my alienated Me in his hands. But as I choose myself as a tearing away from the Other, I assume and recognize as mine this alienated Me.” (p.380) This Me (as-object) which has been alienated and refused stands as the bond between the Other and me and as something I cannot reject as not-mine, that is, “as an image cut off from me and growing in a strange consciousness.” (p.380) Rather, it is “my *being-outside* – not a being passively submitted to which would itself have come to me from outside, but an outside assumed and recognized as *my* outside.” (p.380) It must be this way because I can only refuse the Other as subject; if I “immediately refused the Other as pure object – that is, as existing in the midst of the world – it would not be the Other which I refused but rather an object which on principle had nothing in common with subjectivity. I should remain defenseless before a total assimilation of myself to the Other…” (p.380)

The nature of this Self-as-object is therefore the “limit between two consciousnesses as it is produced by the limiting consciousness and assumed by the limited consciousness.” (p.381) For the former, it is the shell which surrounds and contains me; for the latter, it is something I progress toward but never reach.

The being of the Self-as-object is not “*in-itself*, for it is not produced in the pure exteriority of indifference. But neither is it for-itself, for it is not the being which I have to be by nihilating myself. It is precisely my being-for-others, this being which is divided between two negations with opposed origins and opposite meanings.” (p.381)

We have seen that “my making an object out of the Other must be the second moment in my relation to him” (p.382) and Sartre sees this first moment, when the Other is subject for me, as “motivation for my re-apprehension of myself as a free selfness.” (p.382)

This motivating force comes by way of the emotions – “these feelings themselves are nothing more than our way of affectively experiencing our being-for-others” (p.383) – and Sartre spends a moment now outlining these.

* “Fear is… the discovery of my being-as-object on the occasion of the appearance of another object in my perceptive field. It refers to the origin of all fear, which is the fearful discovery of my pure and simple object-state in so far as it is surpassed and transcended by possibles which are not my possibles.” (p.383)
* “[S]hame is only the original feeling of having my being *outside*, engaged in another being and as such without any defense, illuminated by the absolute light which emanates from a pure subject… Pure shame is not a feeling of being this or that guilty object but in general of being *an* object…” (p.384) Sartre sees modesty – the fear of being naked – as symbolic of this original shame; “To put on clothes is to hide one’s object-state; it is to claim the right of seeing without being seen; that is, to be pure subject.” (p.384)

Sartre takes a brief detour here and notes how as soon as I make the Other appear to me as an object “his subjectivity becomes a simple *property* of the object considered. It is degraded and is defined as “an ensemble of *objective* properties which on principle elude me.” The Other-as-Object “has” a subjectivity as this hollow box has “an inside.”” (p.384)

Shame has three dimensions, i.e. “*I* am ashamed of *myself* before the *Other*.” If one of these terms disappears so does the shame. If the Other is the “they”, I cannot recover myself without scattering it into a plurality of Others but if “I posit it [the subject] as the absolute unity of the subject which can in no way become an object, I thereby posit the eternity of my being-as-object and so perpetuate my shame. This is shame before God; that is, the recognition of my being-an-object before a subject which can never become an object.” (p.385)

* Pride, or vanity, occurs on the ground of shame. “In pride I recognize the Other as the subject through whom my being gets its object-state” but I also “try to apprehend myself as *affecting* the Other by my object-state” (p.386) without ceasing to hold the Other as subject.

Sartre points out there are two authentic attitudes to being-as-object; the first is to recognise the Other as subject (shame), and the second is when I “apprehend myself as the free object by which the Other gets his being-other” (p.386) (arrogance).

Pride, on the other hand, is in bad faith for two reasons: first, it is proud of *being that and only that* (i.e. an in-itself) and, second, it tries, as object, to act on the Other. “I take this beauty or this strength or this intelligence which he confers on me – in so far as he constitutes me as an object – and I attempt to make use of it in a return shock so as to affect him passively with a feeling of admiration or of love. But at the same time I demand that this feeling as the sanction of my being-as-object should be entertained by the Other in his capacity as subject – *i.e.,* as a freedom.” (p.386) This is clearly impossible. In affecting the Other I am making him an object and in doing so, lose the qualification the Other bestowed on me when he was subject.

These three emotions are our original reactions to the Other and “they include within them a comprehension of my selfness which can and must serve as my motivation for constituting the Other as an object.” (p.387)

In making the Other an object for me, I don’t transform him into an in-itself exactly like all the other instruments in my world. Rather, “I recognize his transcendence, but I recognize it not as a transcendence transcending, but as a transcendence transcended… I organize him in the midst of the world in so far as he organizes the world toward himself… he is an order of *my* instruments which is included in the order which I impose on these instruments.” (pp.387-388)

In my case, the “totality of instruments is the exact correlate of my possibilities. Since I *am* my possibilities, the order of instruments in the world is the image of my possibilities projected into the in-itself; that is, the image of what I am.” (p.388) I can never decipher this image, I can only adapt myself to it through action, through *engagement*. In exactly the same way, by apprehending the order the Other brings to *my* instruments, “the fixed flow of the objects of *my* world toward a definite object of *my* universe” (p.389), I can apprehend the image of the Other’s possibilities which he projects into the in-itself, in so doing, I can apprehend the Other as he is *engaged in his image*. “I can increase indefinitely my knowledge of the Other by indefinitely making explicit his relations with other instruments in the world.” (p.389)

However, we must remember that the Other-as-subject can never be known, I can only ever grasp him as object. For this reason, “[t]here is no problem of the knowledge of the Other-as-subject, and the objects of the world do not refer to his subjectivity; they refer only to his object-state in the world as the meaning – surpassed toward my selfness – of the intra-mundane flow.” (p.390) When we see the anger of the Other-as-object manifested as stamping, shouting and threatening gestures, we can in no way, we must not make the mistake of thinking they are the “*sign* of a subjective and hidden anger” (p.390); they can refer to nothing except other gestures. For sure, they *define* the Other, but only the Other-as-object.

We must also remember that the relationship with the Other is always one of reciprocity. The Other is “a qualified object for me only to the extent that I can be one for him… What decides in each case the type of objectivation of the Other and of his qualities is both my situation in the world and his situation; that is, the instrumental complexes which we have each organized and the various *thises* which appear to each one of us on the ground of the world.” (p.392).

One final point regarding all of this is that although I currently make myself not-be the Other, “there remains around him the permanent possibility that he may *make himself* other.” (p.393) Because of this, “the Other-as-object is an explosive instrument which I handle with care… Therefore my constant concern is to contain the Other within his objectivity, and my relations with the Other-as-object are essentially made up of ruses designed to make him remain an object. But one look on the part of the Other is sufficient to make all these schemes collapse…” (p.394)

However, the possibility of the Other to become subject for me is “strictly speaking *inconceivable*” (p.393) because it is not *my* possibility nor is it the possibility of the Other-as-object.

Sartre describes this tussle as being referred from transfiguration (subject for the Other) to degradation (object for the Other) and back again “without ever being able either to get a total view of the ensemble of these two modes of being on the part of the Other – for each of them is self-sufficient and refers only to itself – or to hold firmly to either one of them – for each has its own instability and collapses in order for the other to rise from its ruins.” (p.394)

Sartre concludes this section by discussing the metaphysical question: “Why are there Others?” Specifically, he asks whether we can posit the question at all or whether it must remain an irreducible fact. These are a complicated few pages but the following seems to be the basic gist:

To look at this, Sartre considers the for-itself in its efforts to know itself as an object. This takes place over three ekstases: The first is “the tridimensional projection on the part of the for-itself toward a being which it has to be in the mode of non-being.” (p.395) The second is the reflection which represents the for-itself’s “vain attempt to take a point of view on the nihilation which the for-itself has to be, in order that this nihilation as a simply given phenomenon may be a nihilation *which is*.” (p.395)

In the first ekstasis, the dyad “reflected-reflecting” failed to achieve synthesis with itself because it was completely unable to separate its individual terms, being forever divided by a nothingness which it was; in the second, “the “reflection-reflecting” which is reflected-on exists for a “reflection-reflecting” which is reflective.” (p.396) The individual terms of this relation each tended towards independence but still failed to achieve knowledge of itself as itself because I am the object which I wish to grasp.

The third and final ekstasis is found in being-for-others, which is an internal negation, just like that of reflection, but here “the negation is divided into two internal and opposed negations; each is an internal negation, but they are nevertheless separated from one another by an inapprehensible external nothingness.” (p.396)

Here in this ekstasis we find, according to Sartre, that “on one hand, since the negations are effected in interiority, the Other and myself can not come to one another from the outside. It is necessary that there be a *being* “I-and-the-Other” which has to be the reciprocal scissiparity of the for-others just as the totality “reflective-reflected-on” is a being which has to be its own nothingness; that is, my selfness and that of the Other are structures of one and the same totality of being.” (p.397) This seems promising but again is a failure. In this case “the (reflection-reflecting) reflected is radically distinct from the (reflection-reflecting) reflecting and thereby can be an object for it. But this time the recovery fails because the recovered is *not* the one recovering.” (p.398) They are completely different ‘selfs.’ The two mutual negations being simultaneously made by the individual for-itselfs can not be brought together by any synthesis and “we can not conceive how the totality of which we were speaking earlier would have been able… to produce in its being a nothingness which it in no way has to be.” (p.398)

This results in a contradiction whereby “being-for-others can be only if it *is made-to-be* by a totality which is lost so that being-for-others may arise” (p.399). Sartre postulates the existence of some higher “mind” that might effect this; “being-for-others can exist only if it involves an inapprehensible and external non-being which no totality, not even the mind, can produce or found.” (p.399)

Sartre concludes by saying that in one sense “the existence of a plurality of consciousnesses can not be a primary fact” (p.399) and can therefore be answered. However, in another sense “the facticity of this plurality seems to be irreducible” (p.399), then the question loses all meaning and we have a fundamental contingency.

In conclusion, “The multiplicity of consciousnesses appears to us as a *synthesis* and not as a *collection*, but it is a synthesis whose totality is inconceivable.” (p.400)

**Chapter Two – The Body**

Sartre begins here by asserting that the relation between the body and consciousness is usually obscured because the body is imagined as a *thing* capable of being defined from outside whereas consciousness is apprehended through some inner intuition. Clearly approaching the situation this way will result in dualism and the two substances will be impossible to unite.

The fundamental reason for this, Sartre says, is that “I try to unite my consciousness not with *my* body but with the body *of others*.” (p.401) If I describe my body from the outside, as a physical ‘thing’, I do not capture my body as it exists *for me*. Rather, I describe it the way the Other sees my body, that is, as an object in the world.

Of course, I can see my body in an x-ray, perhaps even *while* I am being x-rayed, but what I see is my “body *in the midst of the world* and as it is for others. My body as it is *for me* does not appear to me in the midst of the world.” (p.402) It is only by way of a reasoning process that I can apprehend that body ‘thing’ I see projected on the screen *out there* as *mine*, at which point it appears “much more my property than my being.” (p.402)

Likewise, I can imagine an arrangement such that through one eye I can see my other eye and so try to catch my body as it is *for me*. However, “in this case again I am the *Other* in relation to my eye. I apprehend it as a sense organ constituted in the world in a particular way, but I can not “see the seeing”; that is, I can not apprehend it in the process of revealing an aspect of the world to me. Either it is a thing among other things, or else it is that by which things are revealed to me. But it can not be both at the same time.” (p.402)

Sartre sees this as revealing that there are two different orders of reality here; two different ontological levels. In one, “my body indicates my possibilities in the world” (p.403) and it is precisely what I surpass toward those possibilities. This is the body as *being-for-itself*. In the other, “seeing my body or touching it is to transform these possibilities of mine into dead-possibilities.” (p.403) This is the discovery of my body as an object and is the body as *being-for-others*.

Confusing these two levels gives rise to contradictions as Sartre shows by reference to the problem of inverted vision. Since the image of the world appears upside-down on the retina, how is it that I see images the right way up? The problem is that “people have wanted to link *my* consciousness of objects to the body of the Other.” (p.403) In taking the external view, they have apprehended a “dead eye in the midst of the visible world” and then tried to use it to “account for the visibility of this world. (pp.403-404)

I. THE BODY AS BEING-FOR-ITSELF: FACTICITY

First of all, Sartre affirms that “there is not a for-itself on the one hand and a world on the other as two closed entities” (p.405) that we must try to build a bridge between. “The for-itself is a relation to the world. The for-itself, by denying that it is being, makes there be a world, and by surpassing this negation toward its own possibilities it reveals the “thises” as instrumental-things.” (p.405)

But the mere fact that there is a world for me requires that it have a “univocal orientation in relation to me.” (p.406) In making some part of the world visible, I make that part stand out on the background of the other indifferent relations of exteriority. In doing so, I take a point of view in relation to it so that (using Sartre’s analogy) the glass is *to the left* of the decanter and *a little behind* it. For someone else, the glass may be *to the right* and *in front of* the decanter. But the point is that it is “not even conceivable that a consciousness could survey the world in such a way that the glass should be *simultaneously* given to it at the right and at the left of the decanter, in front of it and behind it.” (p.405)

A glass which was *all* these relations at the same time would become nothing because it would disappear back into its indifferent self-identity. In fact, if we carried this to the extreme, all “thises” would disappear into the background and even “space as a purely external relation would disappear. The constitution of space as a multiplicity of reciprocal relations can be effected only from the abstract point of view of science; it can not be lived, it can not even be represented.” (p.405)

Sartre notes that idealism correctly asserted that “relation makes the world” (p.406) but by treating this relation as a relation of reciprocity “attained only abstract concepts of pure exteriority”, creating a ““*desert world*” or… “a world without men”; that is… a contradiction, since it is through human reality that there is a world.” (p.406)

Here, Sartre notes with approval that quantum physics (“microphysics” as it appears in my translation of *Being and Nothingness*) includes the observer at the heart of its system as an original relation to the world, which, in a way, encapsulates the theme of Sartre’s entire book.

Sartre goes on to give an example. If I observe the speed of a body with the naked eye and then observe it with a microscope, it will appear much greater in the second case since “it has in the same time traversed a space [much greater]” (p.407). So, for speed to mean anything it must be given in relation to certain dimensions and it is precisely us who supply those dimensions through our upsurge into the world with our bodies.

This is not “relativism” since it has nothing to do with knowledge. It is a relativity of *being*. “Man and the world are relative beings, and the principle of their being *is* the relation.” (p.407) Sartre sees two ‘movements’ in this relation. The first progresses from human-reality to the world whereby I cause things “to be there”. The second goes the other way and reflects the way “things are precisely “things-which-exist-at-a-distance-from-me.”” (p.407)

Pure (non-relative or absolute) knowledge is a fiction. “A pure knowledge in fact would be a knowledge without a point of view; therefore a knowledge of the world but on principle located outside the world. But this makes no sense; the knowing being would be only knowledge since he would be defined by his object and since his object would disappear in the total indistinction of reciprocal relations. Thus knowledge can be only an engaged upsurge in a determined point of view which one *is*. For human reality, to be is to-be-there” (p.407).

This ontological necessity, namely, that the for-itself be in the form of being-there, is embraced by a twofold contingency. On the one hand, “it is altogether contingent that I be, for I am not the foundation of my being… [and on the other hand] it is contingent that it [the point of view I am engaged in] should be precisely in this view to the exclusion of all others.” (p.408)

We have already encountered this structure (contingency and necessity bound together) in the *facticity* of the for-itself. In Part Two we saw the appearance of, or upsurge of, the for-itself as an absolute event (hence, necessary, because without it the idea of foundation doesn’t exist either) which nevertheless preserved the contingent in-itself it was the nihilation of, at its heart. The for-itself can never find this contingency in its heart but instead always surpasses it towards its own possibilities. This means that the for-itself is therefore totally responsible for its being insofar as that being is totally unjustifiable.

Sartre parallels the above in discussing the world; “It is absolutely necessary that the world appear to me *in order*. And in this sense the order *is me* [in the sense that the internal negation by which the for-itself is related to the in-itself is built on being]… But it is wholly contingent that it should be *this* order. Thus it appears as the necessary and totally unjustifiable arrangement of the totality of being.” (p.408) The contingency of this order is built on the contingency of the body and this leads Sartre to say that “this order is the body as it is on the level of the for-itself.” (p.408)

In light of this, Sartre defines the body as “*the contingent form which is assumed by the necessity of my contingency*. The body is nothing other than the for-itself; it is not an in-itself *in* the for-itself, for in that case it would solidify everything. But it is the fact that the for-itself is not its own foundation.” (p.408)

Since the for-itself is always situated in a world, the body is too. But “a situation is not a pure contingent given. Quite the contrary, it is revealed only to the extent that the for-itself surpasses it toward itself. Consequently the body-for-itself is never a given which I can know. It is there everywhere as the surpassed; it exists only in so far as I escape it by nihilating myself. The body is what I nihilate. It is the in-itself which is surpassed by the nihilating for-itself and which re-apprehends the for-itself in this very surpassing.” (p.409)

So, the body is both necessary and contingent; necessary because the very nature of the for-itself demands a point of view on the world but contingent in that *this* point of view (body) has manifested.

Sartre now addresses the problem of sensation to help us understand the preceding better.

We have typically understood sensation (as a subjective experience) to be created when an external stimulant affects a sense organ (an objective unity (stimulant-sense organ)). But it seems impossible for the subjective (sensation) to be affected by an objective unity, given that the two are such radically distinct beings, so we conceived of an environment called *mind* to support the former. This notion of mind is conceived of as an Other’s mind, i.e. an object, which we learn about by studying the Other-as-participant in scientific experiments and studies. The problem is that the “subjective quality of the Other-as-object is purely and simply a closed box. Sensation is inside the box.” (p.415)

For Sartre, this is absurd. In the first place, “[i]t does not correspond to anything which I experience in myself or with regard to the Other.” (p.415) Secondly, “[s]ensation supposes that man is already in the world since he is provided with sense organs” (p.415), in order words, it presupposes the existence of the world which we have seen human reality causes to be there. Finally, upon apprehending the “objective” world through the senses, because our “subjectivity” is locked in our heads, we have caused the whole world to disappear.

Sartre identifies three stages of thought: First, accepting a kind of realism, “we take as valid our perception of the Other, the Other’s senses, and inductive instruments.” (p.415) Second, we reject this realism and declare that sensation, as a modification one suffers, tells us only about our subjective selves. Third, we conclude that this sensation is the “basis of my knowledge of the external world.” (p.415)

Sartre points to the vicious circle contained herein; my perception of the Other’s senses as the foundation for an explanation of the senses depends on me using my senses in the first place. A little later on, Sartre will also note that this account leads to an infinite regression; “if I conceive of my sense organs as like those of the Other, they require a sense organ in order to perceive them” (p.423) and those sense organs require another sense organ to perceive them… and so on.

Ultimately, Sartre slams sensation as, “conceived from the standpoint of the object and applied subsequently to the subject, a bastard existence concerning which we can not say whether it exists in fact or in theory – sensation is a pure daydream of the psychologist.” (p.415) If there is to be perception of objects in the world, Sartre’s theory in which we are in direct presence of the world is the only viable solution.

As Sartre said, we never encounter sensation itself. We only apprehend the green of this book, never the sensation of green. And yet we still have senses. What are we to make of this?

First, the “*senses* are everywhere and yet everywhere inapprehensible.” (p.416) What Sartre means here is that although we see using the sense of sight, we never ‘see’ (apprehend) sight itself. Sight, as the means of vision, is something we can never grasp, even in reflection. Sartre quotes Auguste Comte in support of this: “The eye can not see itself.” (p.417) We can imagine having a third eye which looks on the other two, but, as we have already seen, “then I shall be assuming the point of view of the Other with regard to my senses. I should be seeing eyes-as-objects; I can not see the eye seeing” (p.417).

Sartre makes three points in connection with this:

1. In sensing, I never encounter a sense, only objects, albeit *through* a sense.
2. If I reflect on my sensing, “I shall encounter my consciousness *of* this or that thing-in-the-world, not my visual or tactile sense” (p.417).
3. If I sense my sense organs, I only reveal objects, not a revealing or constructive activity.

Since a sense is inapprehensible in itself, we must define it by the objects it reveals. Now, we have already seen that our senses reveal objects *oriented* in a world. “The object appears on the ground of the world and manifests itself in a relation of exteriority with other “thises” which have just appeared.” (p.417) This implies a world (specifically, a relation of figure to ground), and this world (a sensory field) is in fact a necessity.

But this necessity, we have already seen, comes with a twofold contingency. First, the material connection of a *particular* “this” to the ground is *chosen*, in that the “upsurge of the for-itself is an explicit and internal negation of a *particular* “this” on the ground of the world” (p.418) and *given* in that “my choice operates in terms of an original distribution of the *thises*” (p.418). “It is this contingency between the necessity and the freedom of my choice that we call *sense*.” (p.418)

Sartre gives a concrete example. “It is necessary that the book appear to me on the right or on the left side of the table. But it is contingent that the book appears to me specifically on the left, and finally I am free to look at the book on the table or at the table supporting the book.” (p.418)

Although each “this” only manifests one particular way *at a time*, we must not interpret this as subjective and psychological. The way objects appear to us is still completely objective and derives from the nature of things, not a mysterious, “bastard” subjectivity. “If the object gets smaller when moving away, we must not explain this by some kind of illusion in the observer but by the strictly external laws of perspective. Thus by these objective laws a strictly objective center of reference is defined.” (p.418)

Another way of putting this is that all objects in our sensory field refer to a centre which is located *in that very field*; a centre which, in the upsurge of its being, unfolds distances and orients the objects around it *as a centre*. Only we don’t and *can’t* see this object at the centre because *we are the object at the centre*. We cannot posit it as an object because it is what we are.

So “my being-in-the-world, by the sole fact that it *realizes* a world, causes itself to be indicated to itself as a being-in-the-midst-of-the-world by the world which it realizes. The case could not be otherwise, for my being has no other way of entering into contact with the world except *to be in the world*. It would be impossible for me to realize a world in which I was not and which would be for me a pure object of a surveying contemplation. But on the contrary it is necessary that I lose myself in the world in order for the world to exist and for me to be able to transcend it.” (p.419)

In this sense, Sartre says that my body is everywhere in the world, “spread across all things, and at the same time it is condensed into this single point which all things indicate and which I am, without being able to know it.” (p.420)

At this point, Sartre ventures a definition of senses. After asserting that a sense is not given *before* or *after* sensible objects, he says that “[t]he senses are contemporaneous with objects; they are things “in person” as they are revealed to us in perspective. They represent simply an objective rule of this revelation… [They are] the objective mode in which the qualities of things are presented.” (pp.420-421) ‘Sight’ is thus “the collection of all visible objects in so far as their objective and reciprocal relations all refer to certain chosen sizes… as measures, and to a certain center of perspective.” (p.420)

At the end of the day, the reason for the things we perceive, whatever they may be, does not depend on any kind of subjective modification, but is an “objective relation between objects in the world” (p.420), i.e. the perceived object and my body, and the *truth* of my sensing is also objective.

Now, Sartre generalises what we have specified above in terms of the senses by applying them to my body as the instrument and end of my actions. As with the senses, the common mistake is to interpret *my* actions as they are for me by apprehending the actions of the Other.

“The Other’s body appears to me here as one instrument in the midst of other instruments” (p.422). If I adopt this as my perspective on my *own* body, I will then imagine it as an instrument to direct as I will. This takes us directly to the insurmountable separation between the soul and the body and carries us into an infinite regression; to utilise the Other’s body as an instrument, I need my own instrument; i.e. my body. But if I conceive of *my* body in the same way as I conceive of the Other’s (as an instrument in the midst of the world) then I will need another instrument to utilise it, and another to utilise that one… and so on.

The parallel with the senses and objects appearing in a sensory field is that of objects appearing “to us at the heart of a complex of instrumentality in which they occupy a determined *place*. This place is not defined by pure spatial coordinates but in relation to axes of practical reference.” (pp.423-424) Sartre has elsewhere referred to this a *hodological space*.

Each instrument in this “referential totality” (as Heidegger calls it) refers to other instruments and in this way “the world from the moment of the upsurge of my For-itself is revealed as the indication of acts to be performed; these acts refer to other acts, and those to others, and so on.” (p.424) This is where acts differ from perception because whereas the latter is simply that “to which my For-itself is presence,” the former is “presented as a future efficacy which surpasses and transcends the pure and simple perceived.” (p.424)

The projects (possibilities which I am) to which these acts refer in relation to the instruments (such as the hammer being “to be held by the handle” or the nail as “to be pounded in”) “are revealed only as structures of the world: potentialities, absences, instrumentalities. Thus the world appears to me as objectively articulated; it never refers to a creative subjectivity but to an infinity of instrumental complexes.” (p.425)

In addition, all of the instruments in this totality end up referring to one central instrument which Sartre calls the *key*. This instrument is a necessary centre of reference because without it “all the instrumentalities would become equivalent and the world would vanish due to the total undifferentiation of gerundives.”[[16]](#footnote-16) (p.425)

As we saw with the senses, where the objects all referred to a central inapprehensible object-in-the-midst-of-the-world, the *key* itself is never apprehended *as an instrument*. We only apprehend it by a kind of gap. “I do not apprehend *my* hand in the act of writing but only the pen which is writing; this means that I use my pen in order to form letters but not *my hand* in order to hold the pen. I am not in relation to my hand in the same utilizing attitude as I am in relation to the pen; I *am* my hand.” (p.426)

There are then two ways of apprehending the body. If we apprehend it as just another tool in the world (the body-for-Others), it “becomes a relative center of reference which itself supposes other tools to utilize it… [,] the instrumentality of the world disappears, for in order to be revealed it needs a reference to an absolute center of instrumentality” (p.427). In this case, we get the world of science within which we can *know* the body.

On the other hand, if we apprehend it as the instrumental centre of the world which makes the world exist as an instrumental totality and for which all other instruments exist, the “body is *lived* and not *known*.” (p.427)

Again, as we had no experience of sensation, we have no experience of effort in our actions. What we experience is the “coefficient of adversity” in objects, i.e. the “*resistance* of things. What I perceive when I want to lift this glass to my mouth is not my effort but the *heaviness of the glass* – that is, its resistance to entering into an instrumental complex which I have made appear in the world.” (p.427)

And again, we find that “my body always extends across the tool which it utilizes” (p.428) as well as being located at a central point.

Sartre now defines our body’s *nature-for-us­* as being “perpetually the *surpassed*. The body as a sensible center of reference is that *beyond* *which* I am in so far as I am immediately present to the glass or to the table or to the distant tree which I perceive… Similarly as an instrumental center of instrumental complexes the body can be only the *surpassed*; it is that which I surpass toward a new combination of complexes and which I shall perpetually have to surpass whatever may be the instrumental combination at which I arrive.” (p.429)

Given this, the body is the Past. “It is the immediate presence to the For-itself of “sensible” things in so far as this presence indicates a center of reference and is *already surpassed* either toward the appearance of a new *this* or toward a new combination of instrumental-things. In each project of the For-itself, in each perception the body is there; it is the immediate Past in so far as it still touches on the Present which flees it.” (p.429)

The only way the for-itself can effect this surpassing of the world “is not to survey it but to be engaged in it in order to escape from it; it is necessary always that a *particular* perspective of surpassing be effected. In this sense *finitude* is the necessary condition of the original project of the For-itself… This given which I am without having to be it – except in the mode of non-being – this I can neither grasp nor know, for it is everywhere recovered and surpassed, utilized for my assumed projects. On the other hand everything indicates it to me…” (p.430).

In this, it is clear that my body is my facticity. All of the things bundled up in my facticity; my birth, my race, my class, my nationality, my physiological structure, my character, my past: “all this in so far as I surpass it in the synthetic unity of my being-in-the-world is *my body* as the necessary condition of the existence of a world and as the contingent realization of this condition.” (p.432)

We can see the twofold contingency at play here as well. The *given* is this particular body (facticity) I am in the mode of was, and the *chosen* is the way I elect to constitute my body (facticity) as “too tall” or “to be hidden”, etc. It is this aspect of Sartre’s philosophy which allows him to say that “[e]ven this disability from which I suffer I have assumed by the very fact that I live; I surpass it toward my own projects, I make of it the necessary obstacle for my being, and I can not be crippled without choosing myself as crippled… But this inapprehensible body is precisely the necessity that *there be a choice*, that I do not exist *all at once*. In this sense my finitude is the condition of my freedom, for there is no freedom without choice” (p.432).

Sartre now wants to get a little clearer on just what the body is for me. Even though I apprehend it indirectly through the instruments I grasp, it must be more to me than this.

We know that the body is a point of view but this “supposes a double relation: a relation with the things *on which the body is* a point of view and a relation with the observer *for whom the body is* a point of view.” (p.433) This latter relation is why “the body can not be *for me* transcendent and known” (p.434), why it is completely inapprehensible. Because of this Sartre recommends using the verb “exist” as a transitive verb to delineate the relation between consciousness and the body; i.e. “consciousness *exists* its body. Thus the relation between the body-as-point-of-view and things is an objective relation, and the relation of consciousness to the body is an existential relation.” (p.434)

What does this existential relation amount to? Since consciousness can exist its body only as consciousness, my body must be a structure of consciousness and since it is by nature inapprehensible we must be talking about consciousness in the unreflective mode. “Non-positional consciousness is consciousness (of the) body as being that which it surmounts and nihilates by making itself consciousness-*i.e.,* as being something which consciousness is without having to be it and *which it passes over* in order to be what it has to be. In short, consciousness (of) the body is lateral and retrospective” (p.434). By this Sartre means that the body is *neglected* (lateral) and *passed by in silence* (retrospective).

Yet the body *can* become an object for a reflective consciousness. Sartre will use the difference between pain and illness to illustrate the difference between original, unreflective consciousness (of) our body and the reflective consciousness of our body.

How does consciousness exist its pain (i.e. in the unreflective mode)? Sartre uses the example of pain in the eyes. We don’t apprehend it from a reflective point of view, rather we know it immediately as the-eyes-as-pain. Just before we called it “pain in the eyes” but “it is not [so] named in consciousness, for it is not *known*.” (p.438)

Pain, being a part of our point of view on the world, ‘precedes’ the world and therefore cannot be subsumed under any of its structures. It is not a case of adding ‘pain’ to some ‘pure consciousness’, rather we are a “pain-consciousness”. The pain does not stand out anywhere for us *as pain*, it is only apparent when we are engaged in a project; as such, it is perpetually surpassed.

However, we can also “direct a reflective consciousness” (p.440) onto my pain. In this case “the actual texture of my consciousness reflected-on – in particular my pain – is apprehended and *posited* by my reflective consciousness… The first movement of reflection is therefore to transcend the pure quality of consciousness in pain toward a pain-as-object.” (p.440) In doing so, we make pain what Sartre has called elsewhere, a *psychic object*. Sartre terms this *illness*. Now, it appears distinct and separate from consciousness and can support evaluations and determinations like any other transcendent object.

Sartre likens the pain-illness pairing to that of the note-melody relation; “each concrete pain is like a note in a melody. Across each pain I apprehend the entire illness and yet it transcends them all, for it is the synthetic totality of all the pains, the theme which is developed by them and through them.” (p.442)

Sartre concludes this section by noting that even “when no pain, no specific satisfaction or dissatisfaction is “existed” by consciousness, the for-itself does not thereby cease to project itself beyond a contingency which is pure and so to speak unqualified. Consciousness does not cease “to have” a body.” (p.444) He calls this “pure apprehension of the self as a [contingent] factual existence” (p.444) which I cannot escape and which I cannot place, *Nausea*. “A dull and inescapable nausea perpetually reveals my body to my consciousness. Sometimes we look for the pleasant or for physical pain to free ourselves from this nausea; but as soon as the pain and the pleasure are existed by consciousness, they in turn manifest its facticity and its contingency; and it is on the ground of this nausea that they are revealed.” (p.445)

II. THE BODY-FOR-OTHERS

Since the way *my* body appears for others is the same as the way in which the Other’s body appears to me, Sartre proposes to examine this aspect of my being in terms of the Other’s being-for-me.

We have already seen that my fundamental relation to the Other is not through the body, rather it arises as an internal negation. The Other’s *body* is therefore a secondary structure to me.

We know that the Other appears to me as a secondary centre of reference which is indicated to me by instrumental things in the world as they are arranged by the Other. Since these indications don’t indicate me, Sartre calls them *lateral* properties of the object. The Other appears to me as an instrument which makes use of other instruments for its own ends; an instrument which I, in turn, surpass towards my own ends. In this, the Other’s “body appears to me originally as a point of view on which I can take a point of view, an instrument which I can utilize with other instruments… It is presented to me originally with a certain objective coefficient of utility and of adversity. The Other’s body is therefore the Other himself as a transcendence-instrument.” (p.447)

The knowledge which the Other has of me and of the world is therefore “knowledge-as-an-object. This means that it is a given property of the Other, a property which in turn I can *know*.” (p.447) Since we can never know *the act of knowing* though, Sartre calls it “empty” knowledge or “knowledge as *being-there* or, if you like, *the being-there-of-knowledge*.” (p.447)

What we are really attempting here is to know the Other as a point-of-view, although we must always remember that all we can actually grasp is this point-of-view *as an object*, not as it is a point-of-view-for-itself. Since being a point-of-view involves the senses, we are then embarking on “a study of the Other’s sense organs as they are known through the senses by me. This study will attach the greatest importance to the function of these sense organs – *which is to know*.” (p.448)

The lateral properties of objects provide for us an outline of the Other’s body. Sartre gives the examples of a desk which is a desk-at-which-the-Other-writes and a chair as a chair-where-the-Other-sits. He starts by considering the Other as absent and reminds us that “absence is a structure of *being-there*. To be absent is to-be-elsewhere-in-my-world; it is to be already given for me.” (p.449)

In this sense then, “being-elsewhere is a *being-there* in relation to a concrete ensemble of instrumental-things in a *concrete situation*, it is already facticity and contingency… Thus the Other’s body is his *facticity* as an instrument and as a synthesis of sense organs as it is revealed to my facticity.” (p.449)

If this Other suddenly appears before me, nothing has changed in the fundamental structure of my relation to him or her. The Other appears to me as contingent but he or she did so when absent as well. Objects now indicate him or her to me (the door which he or she pushes upon entering the room) but they did that in the absence of the Other as well. And yet there is something new. “This is the fact that he appears at present on the ground of the world as a *this* which I can look at, apprehend, and utilize directly.” (p.449)

This means that the facticity of the Other is now given *explicitly* instead of *implicitly* through the lateral properties of instrumental-things. This facticity which I grasp is precisely the same facticity that the Other *exists*, only, whereas the “Other’s for-itself wrenches itself away from this contingency and perpetually surpasses it… in so far as I transcend the Other’s transcendence, I fix it… This body of the Other is given to me as the pure in-itself of his being – an in-itself among in-itselfs and one which I surpass toward my possibilities.” (p.450)

There are two contingencies here; first, the Other’s body “is here and could be elsewhere; that is, instrumental-things could be arranged otherwise in relation to it” (p.450) and second, “the body is like this and could be otherwise” (p.450).

At this point, Sartre gives a definition: “This body of the Other is the pure fact of the Other’s presence in *my* world as a being-there which is expressed by a being-as-this.” (p.450)

Initially the Other’s facticity is revealed to me through their *flesh* which is typically hidden behind clothes, makeup, hair, etc. “But in the course of long acquaintance with a person there always comes an instant when all these disguises are thrown off and when I find myself in the presence of the pure *contingency of his presence*.” (p.451)

We never apprehend this body of the Other as an “isolated object having purely external relations with other thises. That is true only for a *corpse*. The Other’s body as flesh is immediately given as the center of reference in a situation which is synthetically organized around it, and it is inseparable from this situation… The Other is originally given to me as a *body in situation*.” (p.451) Sartre explains this with reference to Pierre’s hand which is not first a hand and then a hand taking hold of the glass. Rather, his body is from the start the complex, hand-glass.

This means that the Other’s body is always *meaningful*. It always appears in an infinite number of relations to other instrumental-things around it. Sartre even says that the “body in fact could not appear without sustaining meaningful relations with the totality of what is.” (p.452)

Sartre here defines *life* as just this ensemble of meanings apprehended as a transcended transcendence. “Life represents the ensemble of meanings which are transcended toward objects which are not posited as *thises* on the ground of the world. *Life* is the Other’s body-as-ground in contrast to the body-as-figure inasmuch as this body-as-ground can be apprehended, not by the Other’s for-itself and as something implicit and non-positional, but precisely, explicitly, and objectively *by me*.” (p.452)

What all of this means is that “the being of the Other’s body is for me a synthetic totality. This means: (1) I can never apprehend the Other’s body except in terms of a total situation which indicates it. (2) I can not perceive any organ of the Other’s body in isolation, and I always cause each single organ to be indicated to me in terms of the totality of the *flesh* or of *life*.” (p.453)

In the first aspect above, the Other always moves within both spatial and temporal limits which delineate the meaning of those movements for me. Spatially, the glass as *over there* is the meaning of the Other’s reaching forward. Temporally, the Other’s movements are revealed to me in the present by means of his or her future goals.

In the second aspect, I never perceive a hand moving alongside a motionless body, rather “I can apprehend the movement of the hand or of the arm only as a temporal structure of the whole body. Here it is the whole which determines the order and the movement of its parts.” (p.454)

Sartre stresses that the meanings of the body-for-others we have discovered above do not point to a “mysterious psychism; they *are* this psychism in so far as it is a transcendence-transcended.” (p.454) In other words, they do not refer to something “beyond the body” or “immaterial” in any way. Sartre gives the example of a clenched fist, red face, trembling hands, etc., not *expressing* anger, rather, they *are* anger. A clenched fist by itself is nothing but we never perceive just a clenched fist. We perceive the fist in terms of a synthetic totality; “This meaningful act considered in connection with the past and with possibles and understood in terms of the synthetic totality “body in situation” *is* the anger.” (p.455)

Perception, as an internal negation, releases to us the object *as it is*, not an “empty image of some reality beyond reach.” (p.455) This prompts Sartre to add that “[t]he body is the psychic object *par excellence* – *the only psychic object*.” (p.455)

We have seen that the body of the Other is present as a surpassing towards a future goal but it must take place on a “substratum”. This substratum is the *surpassed*, in other words, the *past*. I can never see this past-being directly but I nevertheless must refer to it in order to explain the present movement I *do* see – “this is pure facticity, pure *flesh*, the pure *in-itself* as the past of a transcended transcendence which is perpetually being made past.” (p.456)

If we apprehend the body of the Other as the surpassed without it being “simultaneously revealed and hidden by the transcendence-transcended” (p.456) it becomes a corpse and “exists in relation to other “thises” in the simple relation of indifferent exteriority: the corpse is *no longer in situation*.” (p.457) The study of *anatomy* takes place on this level. *Physiology* attempts to reconstitute the living person from the corpse and, understanding the body in terms of death, is therefore condemned to never understand life.

Sartre also considers *character* here. Character “exists… only on the plane of the for-others.” (p.458) This is because it can only appear as an object of knowledge. Consciousness never knows itself because it is always *existing* it non-thematically and non-thetically.

Given that character is for-others, it must also be the body as Sartre has described it above. It is therefore the various aspects of the body-for-others we have described taken as an ensemble and revealed immediately.

Finally, Sartre notes that “the Other is given to me totally and without intermediary in the perpetual surpassing of its facticity. But this surpassing does not refer me to a subjectivity; it is the objective fact that the body – whether it be as organism, as character, or as tool – never appears to me without *surroundings*, and that the body must be determined in terms of these surroundings. The Other's body must not be confused with his objectivity. The Other's objectivity is his transcendence as transcended. The body is the facticity of this transcendence.” (p.460)

III. THE THIRD ONTOLOGICAL DIMENSION OF THE BODY

This final aspect of the body is the way “I exist for myself as a body known by the Other.” (p.460) Since this me-as-object is “the flight into an Other” (p.461) I cannot possibly *know* it, but I can apprehend certain of its structures. “Thus my body is not given merely as that which is purely and simply lived; rather this “lived experience” becomes – in and through the contingent, absolute fact of the Other's existence – extended outside in a dimension of flight which escapes me.” (p.461)

Sartre describes this dimension of the body thus: “to the extent that the Other in the original encounter transcends my being-there toward his possibilities, this instrument which I am is made-present to me as an instrument submerged in an infinite instrumental series, although I can in no way view this series by “surveying” it. My body as alienated escapes me toward a being-a-tool-among-tools, toward a being-a-sense-organ-apprehended-by-sense-organs, and this is accompanied by an alienating destruction and a concrete collapse of *my* world which flows toward the Other and which the Other will reapprehend in *his* world.” (p.462)

This experience of alienation occurs through affective structures such as, *shyness*, which Sartre takes as meaning that “he is vividly and constantly conscious of his body not as it is for him but as it is *for the Other*.” (p.463) But this is not a perfect expression for I can properly be embarrassed only by something in my world. “Here the embarrassment is more subtle, for what constrains me is absent. I never encounter my body-for-the-Other as an obstacle…” (p.463)

In a certain sense, Sartre says, it “appears to us then that the Other accomplishes for us a function of which we are incapable and which nevertheless is incumbent on us: *to see ourselves as we are*.” (p.463) We attempt to learn about ourselves this way, as the Other reveals us to ourselves, through language.

Language, the communicating of the Other to me knowledge she has of my body, cannot give me any information on a pre-reflective level. In order for language to be useful in this respect, “it is necessary that this knowledge be applied to an object and that my body already be an object for me.” (p.464) This means that I must already have constituted my body as a “quasi-object” apprehended by reflection.

Reflection apprehends facticity and surpasses it towards a quasi-object which Sartre has called *psychic*. In reflecting on my body I surpass my lived facticity toward this quasi-object (the “psychic-body”) and then through language, the Other communicates to me knowledge of my body as an object, which allows me to surpass the quasi-object towards an understanding which I cannot really know but I can become aware of more completely.

Sartre now returns to his description of pain. Pain is the immediate way I exist my body, illness is pain constituted as a psychic object; a totality. *Disease*, the final step, takes the illness and interprets it in terms of being-for-Others. In this way, I come to *know* it; “that is, I aim at it in its dimension of being which escapes me, at the face which it turns toward Others… I try to apprehend it as if I were the Other in relation to it.” (p.465) This way, I surpass the illness and know it in its objective nature in a certain part of my body described by the Other, e.g. an “ulcer” in my stomach, which is a bag that produces enzymes, etc.

Sartre points out that my body, as the support of the illness, is itself the “substance of the disease… that across which this destructive form is extended.” (p.467)

In this, the object (my reflective apprehension of my stomach-for-others) is “that which I am without having to be it and without being able to transcend it toward anything else… [In this] a being-an-object-for-others haunts – as a dimension of escape from my psychic body – the facticity constituted as a quasi-object for an accessory reflection.” (pp.467-468)

Sartre also talks about nausea being able to be surpassed in the same way, becoming apprehended by me as my body-for-others. In this way it will appear through the affection of *disgust* with myself.

Finally, Sartre discusses an *aberrant* type of appearance. This is where I can directly apprehend parts of my body, for example my hand, as “no longer *indicated* by the environment as a center of reference… My hand is then integrated with the infinite system of utensils-utilized.” (p.468) Clearly this is how the body has typically been understood but for Sartre, all it means is that “in certain well-defined cases we can adopt with regard to our own body the Other’s point of view” (p.468). The fact that we can apprehend parts of our body this way is pure contingency and we can easily imagine bodies where such a perspective is impossible.

It is also true that “this appearance of the body as an instrumental-thing is very late in the child; it is in any case later than the consciousness (of) the body proper and of the world as a complex of instrumentality; it is later than the perception of the body of the Other.” (p.469) Children are able to grasp things, push things, etc., well before they conceive of their hands as *theirs*. “Thus the perception of my body is placed chronologically after the perception of the body of the Other.” (pp.469-470)

**Chapter Three – Concrete Relations With Others**

This chapter will outline the various fundamental modes of being of the for-itself in which its original relation with the Other is manifested. They each “represent the various attitudes of the for-itself in a world where there are Others.” (p.471)

Our original question was “What are the relations of the for-itself with the in-itself?” but Sartre now tells us that the question is more complicated since the relation is “of the for-itself with the in-itself *in the presence of the Other*.” (p.472)

What happens is the Other (through the *look*) objectifies the flight of the for-itself (what the for-itself fundamentally is, i.e. a flight toward the in-itself it would be if it could be the foundation of its own being) which I (as for-itself) “experience as an alienation which I can neither transcend nor know.” (p.473) However, in that I experience it, I must turn towards it and take an attitude on it. These attitudes Sartre calls our “concrete relations with the Other.” (p.473)

“First – The Other *looks* at me and as such he holds the secret of my being, he knows what I *am*. Thus the profound meaning of my being is outside of me, imprisoned in an absence.” (p.473) From here, Sartre identifies two possible attitudes: First, I can deny my objectivity and make an object out of the Other, and second, since the Other in his or her freedom can found my being-in-itself, I can attempt to, as object, recover and possess the Other’s freedom *as freedom*, thereby becoming the foundation of my own freedom.

Sartre reminds us here that it “it not true that I first am and then later “seek” to make an object of the Other or to assimilate him; but to the extent that the upsurge of my being is an upsurge in the presence of the Other, to the extent that I am a pursuing flight and a pursued-pursuing, I am – at the very root of my being – the project of assimilating and making an object of the Other.” (p.474)

In addition, these two attitudes are opposites and to adopt one is to reject the other. However, “it should be noted that at the very core of the one the other remains always present, precisely because neither of the two can be held without contradiction.” (p.474) So, although Sartre will study them both separately, they are in fact intertwined.

I. FIRST ATTITUDE TOWARD OTHERS: LOVE, LANGUAGE, MASOCHISM

The first thing to note here is that the “following descriptions of concrete behaviour must… be envisaged within the perspective of *conflict*. Conflict is the original meaning of being-for-others.” (p.475) The reason for this is because while I am trying to free myself from the *look* of the Other, he is trying to free himself from my *look*. Sartre talks of the *look* of the Other as a form of *possession*; “He makes me be and thereby he possesses me, and in this possession is nothing other than the consciousness of possessing me.” (p.475)

It is important to remember that although the Other founds my being, in the sense that she is the “one who causes “there to be” a being which is my being”, I am still responsible for my being, and in this sense, “I *lay claim* *to* this being which I am; that is, I wish to recover it, or, more exactly, I am the project of the recovery of my being.” (p.475)

In this section, Sartre will discuss the second of the attitudes he outlined above, recovery of my being through absorbing the Other. In order to do this, my “project must leave the Other’s nature intact.” (p.475) Two things must hold for this to work: (1) I must continue to assert the Other, that is, through the internal negation. If the Other is to remain the foundation of my being, she cannot be dissolved in me without causing my being-for-others to dissolve too. (2)The Other must remain the Other-as-subject for me, and in so doing, I must remain as object for her.

The goal here is for the for-itself “to be identified with the Other’s freedom as founding its own being-in-itself.” (p.476) This ideal cannot be realised without “overcoming the fact that there is no relation of internal negativity between the negation by which the Other is made other than I and the negation by which I am made other than the Other.” (p.477) The problem is that this is impossible. “Unity with the Other is… *in fact* unrealizable. It is also unrealizable *in theory*, for the assimilation of the for-itself and the Other in a single transcendence would necessarily involve the disappearance of the characteristic of otherness in the Other.” (p.477)

There is one more reason this project is fundamentally impossible. Since “the Other apprehends me as an object in the midst of the world and does not project identifying me with himself.” (p.477) I would therefore have “to act upon the internal negation by which the Other transcends my transcendence and makes me exist for the Other; that is, *to act upon the Other’s freedom*.” (p.477)

This unrealisable ideal is what Sartre identifies as “the ideal of love, its motivation and its end, its unique value.” (p.477)

We have seen the project of love in pure ontological terms so now Sartre attempts to make it clearer by presenting it from a psychological aspect. This project can be expressed by observing that the lover wants to be loved. It is more than just a desire for physical possession. He wants to “capture a “consciousness.”” (p.478) But why and how?

The lover seeks to appropriate the Other’s freedom, not out of a desire for power. He does not want the enslavement of the beloved. If he obtained this and forced her affection it would be the equivalent of possessing an automaton; “if the beloved is transformed into an automaton, the lover finds himself alone. Thus the lover does not desire to possess the beloved as one possesses a thing; he demands a special type of appropriation. He wants to possess a freedom as freedom.” (p.478)

However, there is a problem; “the lover can not be satisfied with that superior form of freedom which is a free and voluntary engagement. Who would be content with a love given as pure loyalty to a sworn oath?... He wants to be loved by a freedom but demands that this freedom as freedom should no longer be free.” (pp.478-479) But, it can’t be because of him that the freedom is no longer free, or else he would immediately be “submerging the beloved in the midst of the world as a tool which can be transcended.” (p.479) The lover does not want to be the *cause* of the Other limiting her own freedom, he wants to be the “unique and privileged occasion of it... He is and consents to be an *object*. But on the other hand, he wants to be the object in which the Other’s freedom consents to lose itself” (p.479). In other words, he wants to be the “limit which the freedom must accept in order to be free.” (p.480)

This limit to the Other’s freedom must be “lived” by her, that is, as a facticity, and this means precisely that it is *my* facticity; “to want to be loved is to invest the Other with one’s own facticity; it is to wish to compel him to re-create you perpetually as the condition of a freedom which submits itself and which is engaged” (p.480).

If this could be attained I would become *secure* in the Other’s consciousness as the *unsurpassable*. I would be saved from instrumentality. I would become an “object-transcendence, an absolute center of reference around which all the instrumental-things of the world are ordered as pure *means*. At the same time, as the absolute limit of freedom – *i.e.,* of the absolute source of values – I am protected against any eventual devalorization. I am the absolute value… Thus to want to be loved is to want to be placed beyond the whole system of values posited by the Other and to be the condition of all valorization and the objective foundation of all values.” (p.481) Hence, we see the woman in love sometimes asking of her beloved if he would sacrifice traditional morality for her, most notoriously by killing for her.

This means two things: First, the lover will be the “object by whose agency the world will exist for the Other” (p.482). He is no longer apprehended by the *look* as just another object; “to the extent that the upsurge of freedom makes a world exist, I must be, as the limiting-condition of this upsurge, the very condition of the upsurge of a world. I must be the one whose function is to make trees and water exist, to make cities and fields and other men exist, in order to give them later to the Other who arranges them into a world.” (p.481)

Second, he will *be* the world. Instead “of being a “this” detaching itself on the ground of the world, I am the ground-as-object on which the world detaches itself.” (p.482)

The love of the beloved for the lover must not be merely contingent and relative. “The lover is irritated and feels himself cheapened when he thinks that the beloved has chosen him *from among others*.” (p.482) If this is the case, it “becomes *love in the world*, an object which presupposes the world and which in turn can exist for others.” (p.483) What the lover wants is that the “beloved’s being-in-the-world must be a being-as-loving.” (p.483) The free upsurge of the beloved’s being should have the lover as its unique and absolute end. If this should happen, then the lover’s facticity will become *saved*. “By means of this love I then have a different apprehension of my alienation and of my own facticity. My facticity – as for-others – is no longer a fact but a right… Whereas before being loved we were uneasy about that unjustified, unjustifiable protuberance which was our existence, whereas we felt ourselves “*de trop,*” we now feel that our existence is taken up and willed even in its tiniest details by an absolute freedom which at the same time our existence conditions and which we ourselves will with our freedom.” (pp.483-484)

In this, we can see the ontological proof applied to being-for-others; “Our objective essence implies the existence of the Other, and conversely it is the Other’s freedom which founds our essence. If we could manage to interiorize the whole system, we should be our own foundation.” (p.484)

So how does the lover try to achieve this ultimate goal? By seducing the beloved. Seduction, however, is a risky business because, while I want to be object for the Other I must be careful that the Other does not inadvertently become object for me, and also that I not become a pure object, a “this” among other “thises”, for the Other.

The way this is attempted is by being a *fascinating object*. Fascination as a state is the “non-thetic consciousness of being *nothing* in the presence of being.” (p.484) To accomplish this the lover must constitute himself as *meaningful*; his acts must point in two directions: On the one hand, he must try to guide the Other and refer it to the infinity of his possibles (which are, given the fact that he is a transcendence-transcended, nevertheless dead possibles). On the other hand, he must present himself as “bond to the vastest regions of the world.” (p.485)

In other words; “At the same time I *present* the world to the beloved, and I try to constitute myself as the necessary intermediary between her and the world; I manifest by my acts infinitely varied examples of my power over the world (money, position, “connections,”, *etc.*). (p.485) By doing this I present myself as *unsurpassable*. But it can only capture the Other’s freedom if she recognises herself as nothingness in the face of my plenitude of absolute being. Hence, the necessity of being *fascinating*.

Sartre now talks about how all of the above can only take place on the presupposition of language, which he defines as “not a phenomenon added on to being-for-others. It *is* originally being-for-others; that is, it is the fact that a subjectivity experiences itself as an object for the Other.” (p.485) “Of course by language we mean all the phenomena of expression and not the articulated word, which is a derived and secondary mode whose appearance can be made the object of an historical study.” (p.486) I *am* language because whatever I do, the projects I aim at all have meaning outside me, in the Other.

In my first attempt to find a “fascinating language” I am always proceeding blindly simply because the meaning of my “expressions” always escapes me. “I can not even conceive what effect my gestures and attitudes will have since they will always be taken up and founded by a freedom which will surpass them and since they can have a meaning only if this freedom confers one on them… As soon as I express myself, I can only guess at the meaning of what I express – *i.e.*, the meaning of what I am – since in this perspective to express and to be are one.” (pp.486-487) Sartre calls this first aspect of language – where I employ it for the Other – *sacred* because it points to a transcendence beyond the world.

By the same token though, the Other cannot get from my “expressions” to my transcendence. “Attitudes, expressions, and words can only indicate to him other attitudes, other expressions, and other words. Thus language remains for him a simple property of a magical object – and this magical object itself.” (p.487)

Language is therefore *sacred* when I use it and *magical* when the Other hears it.

Sartre also points out that the problem of language is exactly the same as the problem of bodies; I cannot hear myself speak or see myself smile.

Returning to love; Sartre points out that fascination is never enough to produce love on its own. After all, we can be fascinated by many things and yet not love them. The best the lover can do through seducing the beloved is to make himself appear as a precious object “to be possessed”.

Love can only result when the beloved in turn loves the lover; and this means, of course, that the beloved then desires to be loved. Hence, each lover wants the other to apprehend them as an object so that the other’s freedom can in turn be captured by their own.

Sartre summarises the futility of love thus: “This state of affairs is due to the fact that consciousnesses are separated by an insurmountable nothingness, a nothingness which is both the internal negation of the one by the other and a factual nothingness between the two internal negations. Love is a contradictory effort to surmount the factual negation while preserving the internal negation.” (pp.489-490)

Here Sartre outlines what he calls the “triple destructibility of love” (p.491). First, the lovers fail to bridge the factual nothingness which divides them. “The lovers remain each one for himself in a total subjectivity; nothing comes to relieve them of their duty to make themselves exist each one for himself; nothing comes to relieve their contingency nor to save them from facticity.” (p.490) Love is “a reference to infinity since to love is to wish to be loved, hence to wish that the Other wish that I love him.” (p.491)

Secondly, “each of the consciousnesses can at any moment free itself from its chains and suddenly contemplate the other as an *object*. Then the spell is broken; the Other becomes one mean among means. He is indeed an object for others as the lover desires but an object-as-tool, a perpetually transcended object.” (p.490)

Third, love can be dissolved immediately by the presence of a third person. Love requires that the beloved transcend my transcendence as a freedom limited by my own freedom, but in the *look* of a third person, my relation to my beloved “is no longer the experienced relation between a limiting object of all transcendence and the freedom which founds it; it is a love-as-object which is wholly alienated toward the third.” (pp.490-491) This is the reason, Sartre says, why lovers seek solitude. The problem is, of course, that even escaping the literal presence of the Others won’t give them what they seek because “[e]ven if nobody sees us, we exist for *all* consciousnesses and we are conscious of existing for all… One would have to be alone in the world with the beloved in order for love to preserve its character as an absolute axis of reference…” (pp.490-491)

The first reason guarantees the lover’s perpetual dissatisfaction, the second his perpetual insecurity and the third his perpetual shame.

Such a state of affairs can provoke a despair which leads to a new ideal; “instead of projecting the absorbing of the Other while preserving in him his otherness, I shall project causing myself to be absorbed by the Other and losing myself in his subjectivity in order to get rid of my own.” (p.491) This is the *masochistic* attitude. It is the attempt to be nothing more than an in-itself founded in its being by the freedom of the Other; “I attempt therefore to engage myself wholly in my being-as-object. I refuse to be anything more than an object.” (p.492) Sartre describes masochism thus:

Masochism… is the assumption of guilt. I am guilty due to the very fact that I am an object, I am guilty toward myself since I consent to my absolute alienation. I am guilty toward the Other, for I furnish him with the occasion of being guilty – that is, of radically missing my freedom as such. Masochism is an attempt not to fascinate the Other by means of my objectivity but to cause myself to be fascinated by my objectivity-for-others; that is, to cause myself to be constituted as an object by the Other in such a way that I non-thetically apprehend my subjectivity as a *nothing* in the presence of the in-itself which I represent to the Other's eyes.

However, masochism must also fail. In order for it to succeed, I must apprehend myself as the object I wish to be, *such as it is for the Other*. As we have seen, this is fundamentally impossible. “It is *for the Other* that he will be obscene or simply passive, for the Other that he will *undergo* these postures; for himself he is forever condemned to *give them to himself*. It is in and through his transcendence that he disposes of himself as a being to be transcended… Even the masochist who pays a woman to whip him is treating her as an instrument and by this very fact posits himself in transcendence in relation to her. Thus the masochist ultimately treats the Other as an object and transcends him toward his own objectivity.” (p.493)

II. SECOND ATTITUDE TOWARD OTHERS: INDIFFERENCE, DESIRE, HATE, SADISM

We have already seen that this second attitude (which is not really a *second* attitude at all but just as primary as the *first* one) occurs when I react to the Other making me an object by turning my *look* upon him or her and reducing the Other to object for me. At first glance, it appears that my goal has been secured “since I possess the being who has the key to my object-state and since I can cause him to make proof of my freedom in a thousand different ways. But in reality the whole structure has collapsed, for the being which remains within my hands is an Other-as-object. As such he has lost the key to my being-as-object, and he possesses a pure and simple image of me which is nothing but one of its objective affects and which no longer touches me.” (p.494)

But instead of attempting to capture the Other’s freedom, I can attempt to “build my subjectivity upon the collapse of the subjectivity of the Other.” (p.495) Sartre calls this *indifference toward others* and holds it to be characterised by a *blindness* with respect to others. “I do not suffer this blindness as a state. I *am* my own blindness” in the sense that “I practice then a sort of factual solipsism” (p.495) in which Others are absolutely nothing more to me than objects. “Their freedom-as-object is for me only their “coefficient of adversity.” I do not even imagine that they can *look at* me. Of course they have some knowledge of me, but this knowledge does not touch me. It is a question of pure modifications of their being which do not pass from them to me and which are tainted with what we call a “suffered-subjectivity” or “subjectivity-as-object;” that is, they express what they are, not what I am…” (p.495)

In this state of blindness, “I am reassured, I am self-confident; that is, I am in no way conscious of the fact that the Other’s look can fix my possibilities and my body” (p.496). In addition, Sartre says that one can maintain ones *blindness* for a long time, even an entire lifetime.

Nevertheless, Sartre holds that this state is inadequate; “the Other as freedom and my objectivity as my alienated-self *are there*, unperceived, not thematized, but given in my very comprehension of the world and of my being in the world.” (p.496) This results in a “perpetual feeling of lack and of uneasiness.” (p.496)

This is because my fundamental project towards the Other is twofold: (1) to protect myself from being apprehended by the Other’s freedom, and (2) to utilise “the Other in order finally to totalize the detotalized totality which I am, so as to close the open circle, and finally to be my own foundation.” (p.496)

With the Other’s disappearance as *look* I am forced to face myself in my unjustifiable subjectivity and the perpetual pursued-pursuit toward an inapprehensible in-itself-for-itself. In addition, even though I appear to be free from being made an object, there is still “an implicit comprehension of this freedom [of the Other]” (p.497). In fact, in one sense I am in even more danger because “if the Other is an object for me while *he is looking at me*, then I am in danger without knowing it.” (p.497)

This uneasiness can prompt a new attempt to “get hold of the Other’s free subjectivity through his objectivity-for-me… [through] *sexual desire*.” (p.497)

Sartre now embarks on a discussion in which he argues that the for-itself is not sexual “accidentally”, that is, by the pure contingency of having a particular body equipped with a sex organ. Rather, the for-itself is “originally and fundamentally a sexual being” (p.499). He argues for this by considering the fact that infant sexuality precedes the physiological maturation of the sex organs. Eunuchs also do not stop feeling sexual desire. In addition, no “physiological phenomenon can ever explain or provoke sexual desire… although the body plays an important role, we must – in order to understand it – refer to being-in-the-world and to being-for-others.” (p.499)

To better understand this point, Sartre notes that we first apprehend the Other’s sexuality not by ascertaining the length of their hair, their voice, etc., rather we first note the “Other’s sexuality in so far as it is lived and suffered… [in] *desire*; it is by desiring the Other (or by discovering myself as incapable of desiring him) or by apprehending his desire for me that I discover *his* being-sexed, *my* body as sex and *his* body.” (p.500)

So, what is this desire, desire of?

Sartre rejects the idea that desire is for pleasure since this cannot account for why we desire *this* particular woman instead of that one, or even that man. He also rejects the idea that desire is for the physical act of sex. Sex does free us from our desire for a time but this does not mean that we desired the cessation of the desire. In that case desire itself would “be the object which is posited as “to be overcome,” and this can be accomplished only by means of a reflective consciousness. But desire by itself is non-reflective; therefore it could never posit itself as an object to be overcome.” (p.500) According to Sartre, what we have done here is, after learning that the sexual act suppresses the desire, looked at that sexual act and tried to explain our desire in terms of this physical act (procreation, the pleasure derived from orgasm, etc.).

In this way, Sartre claims that “desire by itself by no means implies the sexual act” (p.501) and what’s more, “desire can not posit its suppression as its supreme end or single out for its ultimate goal any particular act, it is purely and simply the desire of a transcendent object.” (p.501)

What is the transcendent object of desire?

It is undeniably desire of a *body*, but not of a certain body part in isolation; “it is addressed not to a sum of physiological elements but to a total form – better yet, to a form *in situation*. (p.502) Being *in situation* also includes the surroundings and finally the world so “desire posits the world and desires the body in terms of the world and the beautiful hand in terms of the body.” (p.502)

In addition, this body is not just a material object; “a purely material object is not *in situation*. Thus this organic totality which is immediately present to desire is desirable only in so far as it reveals not only life but also an appropriate consciousness… A living body as an organic totality in situation with consciousness at the horizon: such is the object to which desire is *addressed*.” (p.502)

Who is the one who desires?

Clearly it is me. “Desire is consciousness since it can *be* only as a non-positional consciousness of itself.” (p.502) But this for-itself does not remain without modification. It is precisely because the for-itself cannot desire without remaining unchanged that Sartre defines desire as *trouble*.

Sartre compares sexual desire with the desire for food. In the latter, we can witness all of the physiological changes that appear from the point of view of the Other and which manifest for the for-itself as pure facticity. “But this facticity *does not compromise* the nature of the For-itself, for the For-itself immediately flees it toward its possibles; that is, toward a certain state of satisfied-hunger…” (p.503) In this, the for-itself surpasses its facticity, that is, its body.

We can recognise in sexual desire also, a certain set of physiological modifications but if we stopped at saying that the for-itself exists its facticity as a pure flight from it toward other possibles, sexual desire would be the same as appetite and this must surely be false.

Sartre holds that in sexual desire, the for-itself no longer flees its facticity, rather “in desire consciousness chooses to exist its facticity on another plane. It no longer flees it; it attempts to subordinate itself to its own contingency – as it apprehends another body – i.e., another contingency – as desirable. In this sense desire is not only the revelation of the Other's body but the revelation of my own body. And this, not in so far as this body *is an instrument* or a *point of view*, but in so far as it is pure facticity; that is, a simple contingent form of the necessity of my contingency. I *feel* my skin and my muscles and my breath, and I feel them not in order to transcend them *toward* something as in emotion or appetite but as a living and inert datum… In desire the body instead of being only the contingency which the For-itself flees toward possibles which are peculiar to it, becomes at the same time the most immediate possible of the For-itself. Desire is not only the desire of the Other's body; it is – within the unity of a single act – the non-thetically lived project of being swallowed up in the body… The being which desires is consciousness *making itself body*.” (p.505)

Why does consciousness make itself body and what does consciousness expect from the object of its desire?

Sartre’s answer is that “in desire I make myself flesh *in the presence of the Other in order to appropriate* the Other’s flesh.” (p.506) Originally, the Other is a “synthetic form in action… a body in situation” (p.506) and we can’t perceive the Other as “pure flesh; that is, in the form of an isolated object maintaining external relations with other *thises*… the *pure contingency of presence*.” (p.506) Nevertheless, desire is just this attempt to strip the body of its *situation* and reveal it as pure flesh; “to *incarnate* the Other’s body.” (p.506) An interesting point here is that Sartre says a nude dancer is not “in the flesh” because she is very much *in situation*. Flesh can be hidden in a number of ways, cosmetics, clothing, etc., but especially by *movement*.

To accomplish this act of “incarnating” the Other, the for-itself employs the *caress*. Sartre denies that the Other was already incarnated because I could only grasp her *in situation* and she transcended her flesh towards her possibilities. “The caress causes the Other to be born as flesh for me and for herself… [it] reveals the flesh by stripping the body of its action, by cutting if off from the possibilities which surround it; the caress is designed to uncover the web of inertia beneath the action – *i.e.,* the pure “being-there” – which sustains it.” (p.507)

Obviously, the caress is not just a physical act, but can be carried out by a look “when it discovers underneath this leaping which is at first the dancer’s legs, the curved extension of the thighs.” (p.507)

The caress, inasmuch as it attempts to realise the Other’s body as flesh, also attempts to reveal to me my own incarnation by impelling the Other to realise her body as flesh. Sartre calls this a *double reciprocal incarnation*.

But what is the motive, or meaning, of desire?

For Sartre, “for the For-itself, to be is to choose its way of being on the ground of the absolute contingency of its being-there. Desire therefore does not *come to* consciousness as heat *comes to* the piece of iron which I hold near the flame. Consciousness chooses itself as desire. For this, of course, there must be a motive; I do not desire just anything at any time.” (p.508)

So, consciousness makes itself desiring in its original upsurge, but why does it nihilate itself in the form of desire?

Since we have seen that in sexual desire the for-itself undergoes a radical modification of itself (whereby it exists its facticity instead of surpassing it; which Sartre calls being “clogged by its facticity” (p.509)), the world must also come to be in a new way; as a world of desire. “If my body is no longer felt as the instrument which can not be utilized by any instrument – *i.e.,* as the synthetic organization of my acts in the world – if it is lived as flesh, then it is as a reference to my flesh that I apprehend the objects in the world. This means that I make myself passive in relation to them and that they are revealed to me from the point of view of this passivity…” (p.509) This means that to perceive an object is not to utilise it as an instrument but to *caress* myself with it as matter, as something like a “*flesh* of objects.” (p.509) In this desiring mode of being, the world is made *ensnaring*, in the sense that it ensnares my body; “consciousness is engulfed in a body which is engulfed in the world.” (p.510)

In general, “I destroy my possibilities in order to destroy those of the world and to constitute the world as a “world of desire”; that is, as a destructured world which has lost its meaning, a world in which things jut out like fragments of pure matter, like brute qualities. Since the For-itself is a choice, this is possible only if I project myself toward a new possibility… that of being reduced to my pure being-there. This project, inasmuch as it is not simply conceived and thematically posited but rather lived… is “disturbance” or “trouble.” (p.513)

But desire is not first a relation to the world, it is primarily a relation with the Other and it is here that its meaning lies. Desire aims to ensnare the Other’s freedom within his facticity; if the Other’s for-itself comes to the surface of her body, and is extended throughout it, then in touching this body I can touch her free subjectivity. “I want to *possess* the Other’s body, but I want to possess it is so far as… the Other’s consciousness is identified with his body.” (p.512)

If I can capture the Other’s consciousness in this way, then I can be assured that the Other’s transcendence will not transcend my freedom, in a sense, guaranteeing my subjectivity. This is the final meaning of desire.

In making myself flesh I attempt to “fascinate the Other by my nakedness and to provoke in her the desire for my flesh – exactly because this desire will be nothing else in the Other but an incarnation similar to mine. Thus desire is an invitation to desire.” (p.514) Finally then, in desire “each consciousness by incarnating itself has realized the incarnation of the other; each one's disturbance has caused disturbance to be born in the Other and is thereby so much enriched. By each caress I experience my own flesh and the Other's flesh through my flesh, and I am conscious that this flesh which I feel and appropriate through my flesh is flesh-realized-by-the-Other.” (p.514)

Unfortunately, sexual desire is doomed to fail. In terms of pleasure, incarnation is manifested through the erection and the contingent pleasure of ejaculation ends this, thereby ending the incarnation. In addition, pleasure ends desire because “it motivates the appearance of a reflective consciousness *of* pleasure, whose object becomes a reflective enjoyment; that is, it is *attention to the incarnation of the For-itself which is reflected-on* and by the same token it is forgetful of the Other’s incarnation.” (p.516) In this case, desire misses its goal which was originally to incarnate the consciousness of the Other in her body and becomes lost in its own flesh.

But desire also fails in other ways. After the caress has caused the Other’s body to be saturated with her consciousness and freedom, I must then seize it. But in the very act of apprehending her body (by pulling it to me, holding it, etc.) “my own body ceases to be flesh and becomes again the synthetic instrument *which I am*. And by the same token the *Other* ceases to be an incarnation; she becomes once more an instrument in the midst of the world which I apprehend in terms of its situation.” (pp.516-517)

The failure of desire can then lead to sadism. Sartre describes sadism as tenacity, barrenness and passion. It is tenacity in the sense that, even though the for-itself no longer understands what it is engaged in, it persists in its activities. It is barrenness because, having re-apprehended itself in its synthetic totality and resumed its perpetual flight from its own facticity, it is now empty of trouble. It is passion in the sense that it is both tenacity and barrenness.

The sadist’s goal is “to seize and to make use of the Other not only as the Other-as-object but as a pure incarnated transcendence. But in sadism the emphasis is put on the instrumental appropriation of the incarnated-Other. The “moment” of sadism in sexuality is the one in which the incarnated For-itself surpasses its own incarnation in order to appropriate the incarnation of the Other.” (p.518) Given the fact that sadism involves using the Other’s body as a tool to make the Other realise her incarnated existence, it takes place with violence.

The type of incarnation the sadist attempts to realise is the Obscene. The Obscene is something Sartre calls *ungraceful*. *Grace* refers to the actions and movements of the body *in situation*. In this way each act is “understood in terms of the situation and of the end pursued… The graceful act in so far as it reveals the body as a precision instrument, furnishes it at each instant with its justification for existing; the hand *is* in order to grasp and manifests at the start its being-in-order-to-grasp. In so far as it is apprehended in terms of a situation which requires grasping, the hand appears as itself *required* in its being, as summoned.” (p.519) In essence then, grace gives the appearance of a being which is the *foundation of itself in order to—*; it disguises the contingent, unjustifiable nature of the for-itself.

The *ungraceful* therefore appears when a movement becomes *mechanical* – the body is part of an ensemble which justifies it but only as a pure instrument. Sartre describes the *obscene* as when “the body adopts postures which entirely strip it of its acts and which reveal the inertia of its flesh. The sight of a naked body from behind is not obscene. But certain involuntary waddlings of the rump are obscene. This is because then it is only the legs which are acting for the walker, and the rump is like an isolated cushion which is carried by the legs and the balancing of which is a pure obedience to the laws of weight. It can not be justified by the situation… Suddenly it is revealed as an unjustifiable facticity; it is *de trop* like every contingent.” (p.520) The flesh revealed so is obscene only when “revealed to someone who is not in a state of desire and *without exciting his desire*.” (p.521)

So the sadist seeks to destroy grace and reveal the facticity of the flesh in its full, naked, unjustifiable facticity. But we must remember that in possessing the body, the sadist is really seeking to possess the Other’s freedom. He is still trying to cause the flesh to appear to the Other so that the Other’s consciousness and freedom will be incarnated in it. This is why the sadist seeks proof of the Other’s enslavement through demanding verbal humiliation or submission.

Sartre points out that although the sadist considers himself the complete cause of the breaking of the Other (e.g. through begging for mercy, forced to humiliate himself, etc.) and sees a freedom struggling against the presentation of his body under the aspect of the obscene finally freely choosing to be submerged in the flesh, in reality “the abjuration remains *free*; it is a spontaneous production, a response to a situation… No matter what resistance the victim has offered, no matter how long he has waited before begging for mercy, he would have been able despite all to wait ten minutes, one minute, one second longer. He has *determined* the moment at which the pain became unbearable.” (p.523)

However, sadism, like indifference and desire, fails too. “In the first place there is a profound incompatibility between the apprehension of the body as flesh and its instrumental utilization.” (p.524) If the flesh is made into an instrument (as it has to be in sadism), then it refers me to other instruments in a situation which I create and its meaning as flesh escapes me, and if the instrument is made into flesh (when all is before me is a panting body), then I cannot get hold of it at all.

Secondly, although the sadist seeks to appropriate the transcendent freedom of the victim, as we saw above, his or her freedom remains on principle out of reach. In addition, “[h]e can act upon the freedom only by making it an objective property of the Other-as-object; that is, on freedom in the midst of the world with its dead-possibilities.” (p.525) “The sadist discovers his error when his victim *looks at* him; that is, when the sadist experiences the absolute alienation of his being in the Other's freedom; he realizes then not only that he has not recovered his *being-outside* but also that the activity by which he seeks to recover it is itself transcended and fixed in “sadism” as an *habitus* and a property with its cortege of dead-possibilities and that this transformation takes place through and for the Other whom he wishes to enslave.” (pp.525-526)

In bringing everything back to the original question we asked before drifting into desire, Sartre now says that as soon as “there is” the body and as soon as “there is” the Other, we react in one of the ways discussed here. Our physiological structure conditions this reaction as a completely contingent, symbolic expression of the fact that we must assume one of these attitudes. “Thus we shall be able to say that the For-itself is sexual in its very upsurge in the face of the Other and that through it sexuality comes into the world.” (p.527) Sartre sees these sexual relations as the “skeleton” within all other examples of concrete conduct with the Other (collaboration, conflict, obedience, etc.)

In addition, all of the attitudes here are original and demonstrate the fundamental instability that lies at the heart of our relations with the Other. Whether going from being-looked-at to being-a-look, love to desire, masochism to sadism, etc., our relations with the Other are characterised by perpetual instability and conflict.

This serves to reinforce what Sartre has been saying all along. The Other’s freedom is on principle inapprehensible. Even if we took Kant’s categorical imperative and treated everyone as an end, we would still end up making of this freedom a transcendence-transcended. On the other hand, we could only act for the benefit of the Other by apprehending the Other-as-object as an instrument.

Sartre makes the point here that just by the very fact of my existence, I cannot *not* transcend the Other’s freedom. Even to offer comfort is to “disengage the Other’s freedom from the fears or griefs which darken it” (p.530) and in addition, consolation is “the organization of a system of means to an end and is designed to *act* upon the Other and consequently to integrate him in turn as an instrumental-thing in the system.” (p.530)

Even deliberately trying to leave the freedom of the Other intact by not interfering with it at all will fail because from the “moment that I exist I establish a factual limit to the Other’s freedom. I *am* this limit, and each of my projects traces the outline of this limit around the Other… To realize tolerance with respect to the Other is to cause the Other to be thrown forcefully into a tolerant world. It is to remove from him on principle those free possibilities of courageous resistance, of perseverance, of self-assertion which he would have had the opportunity to develop in a world of intolerance.” (p.530)

What all of this discussion of the freedom of the Other reveals is that “respect for the Other’s freedom is an empty word [in the sense of not transcending it towards my own possibilities]; even if we could assume the project of respecting this freedom, each attitude we adopted with respect to the Other would be a violation of that freedom which we claimed to respect… We are already thrown in the world in the face of the Other; our upsurge is a free limitation of his freedom and nothing – not even suicide – can change this original situation.” (p.531)

It is from this situation that guilt arises. “It is before the Other that I am *guilty*. I am guilty first when beneath the Other's look I experience my alienation and my nakedness as a fall from grace which I must assume… Again I am guilty when in turn I look at the Other, because by the very fact of my own self-assertion I constitute him as an object and as an instrument, and I cause him to experience that same alienation which he must now assume. Thus original sin is my upsurge in a world where there are others; and whatever may be my further relations with others, these relations will be only variations on the original theme of my guilt.” (p.531)

What’s more, there is no possibility of ever being absolved of this guilt because, as we have seen whatever “I may do *for* the Other’s freedom… my efforts are reduced to treating the Other as an instrument and to positing his freedom as a transcendence-transcended. But on the other hand, no matter what compelling power I use, I shall never touch the Other save in his being-as-object.” (p.531)

The final concrete relation with Others is hate, and this arises in a for-itself which has seen the futility of all former attempts at grounding itself in the Other. Hate is the attempt to “pursue the death of the Other… It implies a fundamental resignation; the for-itself abandons its claims to realize any union with the Other; it gives up using the Other as an instrument to recover its own being-in-itself. It wishes simply to rediscover a freedom without factual limits; that is, to get rid of its own inapprehensible being-as-object-for-the-Other” and to abolish its dimension of alienation. This is equivalent to projecting the realization of a world in which the Other does not exist. The for-itself which hates consents to being only for-itself...” (p.532)

In this, Sartre finds a distinction between hating and despising; the former hates the existence of the Other in general as a transcendence-transcended, the latter despises a particular objective detail in the Other. Because of this, hate doesn’t always arise on the occasion of my being subjected to something evil. It can also occur on the occasion of a kindness. “The occasion which arouses hate is simply an act by the Other which puts me in the state of *being subject to* his freedom.” (p.533)

Of course, hate is also a failure. Its goal is to suppress other consciousnesses but even if it could do this, “it could not bring it about that the Other had not been. Better yet, if the abolition of the Other is to be lived at the triumph of hate, it implies the explicit recognition that the Other *has existed*.” (p.534)

We can never escape this existence of the Other. “Immediately my being-for-others by slipping into the past becomes an irremediable dimension of myself. It is what I have to be as having-been-it… He who has once been for-others is contaminated in his being for the rest of his days even if the Other should be entirely suppressed; he will never cease to apprehend his dimension of being-for-others as a permanent possibility of his being… [In addition] he has even lost all hope of acting on this alienation and turning it to his own advantage since the destroyed Other has carried the key to this alienation along with him to the grave. What I was for the Other is fixed by the Other’s death and I shall irremediably be it in the past.” (p.534)

III. “BEING-WITH” (*MITSEIN*) AND THE “WE”

Sometimes we discover ourselves in community with other consciousnesses and this would seem to refer to the “thought of a plurality of subjects which would simultaneously apprehend one another as subjectivities, that is, as transcendences-transcending and not as transcendence-transcended.” (p.535)

For Sartre though, this “recognition is not the object of an explicit thesis; what is explicitly posited is a common action or the object of a common perception… Thus the recognition of subjectivities is analogous to that of the self-recognition of the non-thetic consciousness.” (p.535) Sartre gives the example of a spectator in a theatre who is a consciousness *of* the performance which is constituted non-thetically as a consciousness (of) being a *co-spectator*…” (p.535)

In addition, Sartre states that the “we” is not an inter-subjective consciousness or a new kind of being; rather the “we” is always and only experienced by a particular consciousness. In this the “being-for-others precedes and founds the *being-with-others*.” (p.537)

A. The Us-Object

In this first section, Sartre will address how I can experience myself as an object in a community of objects.

Sartre begins by cataloguing a number of different relations that can be brought about by the introduction of a Third person while I am in a relation with the Other:

1. Third and Other look at me – they become a “they-subject” for me
2. Third looks at the Other who is looking at me – in this case I apprehend the Third, not directly, but upon the Other. The “third transcendence transcends the transcendence which transcends me…” (p.538). This is *metastable* (unstable) and will decompose before long
3. The Third and I look at the Other – I join a “we-as-subject” with the Other as our object
4. I look at the Third who looks at the Other who looks at me – Sartre calls this situation “indeterminate”
5. I look at both the Third and the Other – they appear to me as “they-as-object”
6. Third looks at the Other at whom I am also looking (without seeing the Third and therefore not joining him as a “we-subject”) – in this case, I apprehend upon the Other’s behaviour the Third and the Other flees from my world. He is still object for me but is now ambiguous since he escapes me towards the transcendence of the Third
7. The Third looks at me while I am looking at the Other – I become object for the Third and my possibilities regarding the Other become dead-possibilities. The Other is “*neutral*; something which is purely and simply there and with which I have nothing to do.” (p.539)
8. Third looks at both the Other and I – the Other and I become an “us-object”

We are concerned here with the eighth and final situation; “I am engaged in conflict with the Other. The Third comes on the scene and embraces both of us with his look.” (p.540)

The Other is still an object in the world but the world to which he belongs now is that of the Third. Likewise, for the Other I am an object in the midst of a world which belongs to the Third. With “the appearance of the Third I suddenly experience the alienation of my possibilities, and I discover by the same token that the possibilities of the Other are dead-possibilities. The situation does not thereby disappear; but it flees outside both my world and the Other’s world; it is constituted in objective form in the midst of a third world.” (p.540)

In this world that flees both of us “the Other and I shall figure as *equivalent* structures in *solidarity* with each other… Thus what I experience is a being-outside in which I am organized with the Other in an indissoluble, objective whole, a whole in which I am fundamentally *no longer distinct* from the Other but which I agree in solidarity with the Other to constitute.” (pp.540-541)

Sartre says this Us-object is never *experienced* (all that is experienced is solidarity with the Other) or *known* (since it cannot be reflected on – reflection collapses the “Us” because in reflection the for-itself posits its selfness against *Others*). Rather, the Us-object “is revealed to us only by assuming the responsibility for this situation, I must of necessity – in the heart of my free assumption – assume *also* the Other.” (p.541)

Every human situation is capable of being experienced as “Us” because all it requires is the addition of a Third. In addition, “it is not necessary that a concrete look should penetrate and transfix us in order for us to be able to experience ourselves as integrated outside in an “Us.” So long as the detotalized-totality "humanity" exists, it is possible for some sort of plurality of individuals to experience itself as “Us” in relation to all or part of the rest of men, whether these men are present “in flesh and blood” or whether they are real but *absent*.” (p.543)

Sartre now talks a little about a special type of “Us”, that of class consciousness. He asserts that none of the shared conditions of their “lot” will serve to unite the oppressed collectivity as a class. Rather, as in the above case, it is the appearance of a Third, usually in collective form as, the “master”, or “bourgeois”, or “capitalist”, as those who are “outside the oppressed community and *for whom* this community exists. It is therefore *for* them and *in their freedom* that the reality of the oppressed class is going to exist. They cause it to be born by their look.” (p.544)

The “Us” can only appear as a collective alienation in the presence of a Third; “Without the Third, no matter what might be the adversity of the world, I should apprehend myself as a triumphant transcendence; with the appearance of the Third, “I” experience “Us” as apprehended in terms of things and as things overcome by the world.” (p.545)

Sartre also finds an example of the “Us-object” in “mob psychology” which he holds to be a type of love. In this situation, the “person who says “Us” then reassumes in the heart of the crowd the original project of love, but it is no longer on his own account; he asks a Third to save the whole collectivity in its very object-state so that he may sacrifice his freedom to it. Here as above disappointed love leads to masochism. This is seen in the case in which the collectivity rushes into servitude and asks to be treated as an object.” (p.546)

And again in the instance of a crowd having been constituted as a *crowd* by a leader or speaker; “each one [member of the *crowd*] then forms the project of losing himself in this object-ness, of wholly abandoning his selfness in order to be no longer anything but an instrument in the hands of the leader. But this instrument in which he wants to be dissolved is no longer his pure and simple personal for-others; it is the totality, objective-crowd.” (p.546)

Finally, this whole discussion implies that there can be an “Us-object” that includes *all* Others. “This effort at recovering the human totality can not take place without positing the existence of a Third, who is on principle distinct from humanity and in whose eyes humanity is wholly object… He is the one who is Third in relation to all possible groups, the one who in no case can enter into community with any human group, the Third in relation to whom no other can constitute himself as a third. This concept is the same as that of the being-who looks-at and who can never be looked-at; that is, it is one with the idea of God. But if God is characterized as radical absence, the effort to realize humanity as *ours* is forever renewed and forever results in failure. Thus the humanistic “Us” – the Us-object – is proposed to each individual consciousness as an ideal impossible to attain although everyone keeps the illusion of being able to succeed in it by progressively enlarging the circle of communities to which he does belong.” (p.547)

B. The We-Subject

Sartre begins this aspect of our “being-with” by considering the instance in which our belonging to a subject-community is most salient – that of manufactured objects. These objects have been worked on precisely for they-subjects. “The alienating transcendence is here the consumer; that is, the “They” whose projects the worker is limited to anticipating.” (p.548)

Hence, the manufactured object makes me known to myself as “they”, but there is a catch here in that “it refers to me the image of my transcendence as that of any transcendence whatsoever. And if I allow my possibilities to be channeled by the instrument thus constituted, I experience myself as any transcendence” (p.548). Sartre gives the example here of a subway map which is made for me, but for me as “they”. Of course, I differentiate myself by the individual upsurge of my being and by the final ends my acts aim at but nevertheless, my “immediate ends are the ends of the “They,” and I apprehend myself as interchangeable with any one of my neighbors. In this sense we lose our real individuality, for the project which we are is precisely the project which others are.” (p.548)

However, Sartre notes two things here:

1. This is a psychological, subjective experience for a single consciousness, not an ontological one. There is no *real* unification of the for-itselfs happening here. It is like being engaged in a common rhythm which I contribute to creating. However, “the enveloping of my rhythm by the rhythm of the Other is apprehended “laterally.” I do not utilize the collective rhythm as an instrument; neither do I contemplate it – in the sense in which for example, I might contemplate dancers on a stage. It surrounds me and involves me without being an object for me. I do not transcend it toward my own possibilities; but I slip my transcendence into its transcendence, and my own end – to accomplish a particular work, to arrive at a particular place – is an end of the “They” which is not distinct from the peculiar end of the collectivity.” (p.549)

Because of this, my experience of the We-subject does not necessarily mean others also experience it. In addition, it is unstable, depending on organisations in the world and disappearing when they disappear.

1. “The experience of the We-subject can not be primary; it can not constitute an original attitude toward others since, on the contrary, it must in order to be realized presuppose a twofold preliminary recognition of the existence of others. In the first place, the manufactured object is such only if it refers to the producers who have made it and to rules for its use which have been fixed by others.” (p.551)

In the second place, in order to be able to discover oneself as *anybody*, one must first be surrounded by Others. “The *Mitsein* by itself would be *impossible* without a preliminary recognition of what the Other is…” (p.553)

Sartre now turns to the ‘subject side’ of his oppressed class in the last section. He says symmetry might demand that the oppressing class apprehend itself as a We-subject in the face of the oppressed class, but this is false.

He describes the individual for-itselfs that make up the oppressing class as consciousnesses which do not recognise themselves as belonging to a collective; in fact, “the very nature of the We-subject implies that it is made up of only fleeting experiences without metaphysical bearing. The “bourgeois” commonly denies that there are classes… he offers instead of class solidarity larger solidarity, natural solidarity, in which the worker and the employer are integrated in a *Mitsein* which suppresses the conflict.” (p.554)

So, in conclusion of this short section, Sartre says:

Thus there is no symmetry between the making proof of the Us-object and the experience of the We-subject. The first is the revelation of a dimension of real existence and corresponds to a simple enrichment of the original proof of the for-others. The second is a psychological experience realized by an historic man immersed in a working universe and in a society of a definite economic type.

So, the Us-object is completely dependent on a Third; that is, on my being-for-others and the We-subject is a psychological experience which also depends on the existence of Others. This means that our being-with-others is not foundational; the “essence of the relations between consciousnesses is not the *Mitsein*; it is conflict.” (p.555)

**Part Four**

**Having, Being, and Doing**

Sartre sees human reality (and therefore all human conduct) as arising through the three “cardinal categories” of having, doing and being. He sees contemporary thinkers as replacing the traditional understanding of human reality as “being” (e.g. Stoic or Spinozan ethics) with that of “doing”. He therefore sets out to determine which is the “supreme value of human activity” (p.558), “doing” or “being” and what we are to make of “having”.

**Chapter One – Being and Doing: Freedom**

I. FREEDOM: THE FIRST CONDITION OF ACTION

Sartre begins this section by looking at the concept of *action*. The most important thing to note here is that “an action is on principle *intentional*” (p.559) by which Sartre means aimed at the intentional realisation of a conscious project.

Now such an intention implies that a consciousness has apprehended a current, objective *lack* (or *negatite*) and some future possible state of the world (i.e. currently non-existing) which would remedy this. This future apprehension thereby serves as an organising theme for all of the acts to follow. “This means that from the moment of the first conception of the act, consciousness has been able to withdraw itself from the full world of which it is consciousness and to leave the level of being in order frankly to approach that of non-being.” (p.560)

Sartre observes that when someone is completely immersed in their historical situation and is unable to see the problems that exist within it this is not due to his having become “accustomed to it” but rather because “he apprehends it in its plenitude of being and because he can not even imagine that he can exist in it otherwise.” (p.561) As a consequence of this, *he does not act* to change his situation, no matter how terrible it is. His “misfortunes do not appear to [him] “habitual” but rather *natural*; they *are*, that is all…” (p.561)

In order for any action to take place there must be the double nihilation talked of earlier: “on the one hand, he must posit an ideal state of affairs as a pure *present* nothingness; on the other hand, he must posit the actual situation as nothingness in relation to this state of affairs.” (p.562)

There are two important consequences of all this:

1. Since “an act is a projection of the for-itself toward what is not, and what is can in no way determine by itself what is not” (p.562), no factual state can serve as motivation for *any* act
2. “No factual state can determine consciousness to apprehend it as a *negatite* or as a lack.” (p.562)

But not only does the for-itself bring non-being to the world by determining a situation as “lacking in–”, we must also remember that there “*is* a factual state – satisfying or not – only by means of the nihilating power of the for-itself.” (p.562) In other words, consciousness is intimately connected to being (as we have seen earlier through the internal negation). So, in negating being, the for-itself is also negating itself; “This implies for consciousness the permanent possibility of effecting a rupture with its own past, of wrenching itself away from its past so as to be able to consider it in the light of a non-being and so as to be able to confer on it the meaning which *it has* in terms of the project of a meaning which it *does not have*.” (p.563)

Sartre expresses dissatisfaction with both determinist and libertarian accounts of human reality. Freewill proponents seek acts without a prior cause and determinists, in maintaining that every act requires a cause, fail to look beyond this point. Sartre agrees that every act must have a cause; “since every action must be *intentional*; each action must, in fact, have an end, and the end in turn is referred to a cause.” (p.563) This ties back in with Sartre’s point about the “unity of the three temporal ekstases; the end or temporalization of my future implies a cause (or motive); that is, it points toward my past, and the present is the upsurge of the act.” (p.563)

Sartre outlines the structure of an act as ‘cause (or motive)-intention-act-end’ and proceeds to investigate exactly how a cause (or motive) can arise in the first place. His main point here is that the value of the cause as a motivation for the act can only come from the for-itself; “in relation to the *value which I* implicitly give to this life; that is, it is referred to that hierarchal system of ideal objects which are value.” (p.564) In addition, the cause can only get its meaning in relation to the end, that is, from a non-existent; “It is therefore in itself a *negatite*.” (p.564) “Thus the motive makes itself understood as what it is by means of the ensemble of beings which “are not,” by ideal existences, and by the future… Causes and motives have meaning only inside a projected ensemble which is precisely an ensemble of non-existents. And this ensemble is ultimately myself as transcendence; it is Me in so far as I have to be myself outside of myself.” (p.564)

The result is that every act has a motive (or cause) but this does not mean that the motive *causes* the act; rather, the motive is an integral part of the act. Sartre sees the motive, the act and the end as all being “constituted in a single upsurge… But the organized totality of the three is no longer explained by any particular structure, and its upsurge as the pure temporalizing nihilation of the in-itself is one with freedom.” (p.565)

This brings Sartre to freedom. He first argues that there is no essence of freedom and the reason for this is that essences are only revealed through the human being who surpasses herself toward her own possibilities; that is, through freedom. Freedom itself is the foundation of all essences and that is why it itself can have no essence.

So I exist as freedom which can only mean that I am a non-thetic consciousness (of) freedom and this means that “I must necessarily possess a certain comprehension of freedom” (p.566). This is what Sartre is looking to expose.

We have already determined that human reality introduces negation into the world twice; through nihilating the world *and* through nihilating itself. But for this to be true human reality must be its own nothingness; “For the for-itself, to be is to nihilate the in-itself which it is.” (p.567) This is precisely what freedom is.

Indeed, the simple fact of being conscious of my causes places me at a distance from them; they are transcendent objects for me; “I escape them by my very existence. I am condemned to exist forever beyond my essence, beyond the causes and motives of my act. I am condemned to be free.” (p.567)

Sartre sees the attempt to deny our freedom as an attempt to confer on ourselves the status of the in-itself. Determinism seeks to fill us with a plenitude of being, such that we *are*, and that is all; “We try to confer permanence upon them [causes and motives]. We attempt to hide from ourselves that their nature and their weight depend each moment on the meaning which I give to them; we take them for constants.” (p.568) In the same, way we try to give our ends permanence, maintained not by their own free transcendence but by God, nature, society, “my” nature, etc.

In general, “freedom in its foundation coincides with the nothingness which is at the heart of man. Human-reality is free because it *is not enough*. It is free because it is perpetually wrenched away from itself and because it has been separated by a nothingness from what it is and from what it will be. It is free, finally, because its present being is itself a nothingness in the form of the “reflection-reflecting.” Man is free because he is not himself but presence to himself. The being which is what it is can not be free. Freedom is precisely the nothingness which is *made-to-be* at the heart of man and which forces human-reality *to make itself* instead of *to be*.” (p.568)

Sartre also points out here that if we start out imagining the for-itself as a plenum of being then we will never find freedom in it, comparing this to looking for emptiness in a container which one has already filled to the brim. He also says that “[m]an can not be sometimes slave and sometimes free; he is wholly and forever free or he is not free at all.” (p.569)

Next, Sartre looks at the will and the passions, aiming to clear up the tendency we have to identify free acts with voluntary (willed) acts and determined acts with the passions.

He immediately rejects the idea that the unity of consciousness can be split into a dualism of substantial in-itselfs, one of which was determined and one which was free. He maintains that the free spontaneity could never act on the determined part and vice versa; “any synthesis of two types of existents is impossible; they are not homogeneous; they will remain each one in its incommunicable solitude.” (p.570) Neither the will nor the passions can be considered as in-itselfs; the conception of a “struggle between a will-thing and passion-substances” (p.573) is insupportable.

If we are going to maintain that the will is free, it cannot be a “*given* psychic fact; that is, in-itself… If the will is to be freedom, then it is of necessity negativity and the power of nihilation.” (p.571) But then it makes no sense to separate out the will as some *thing*(in-itself) *in* consciousness.

At this point, Sartre also questions the conventional wisdom which says that the passions are imposed on us with the force of a full determinism. Passions are also nihilating. They are first a project, they posit a state of affairs as intolerable, then they “effect a withdrawal in relation to this state of affairs and… nihilate it by considering it in the light of an end – *i.e.,* of a non-being” (p.571). This is precisely the process we have defined as freedom.

In addition, the will cannot be the foundation of freedom because it presupposes “the foundation of an original freedom in order to be able to constitute itself as will” (p.571). This freedom is obviously the one whereby the for-itself creates the world through its upsurge. The will is actually “a reflective decision in relation to certain ends. But it does not create these ends. It is rather a mode of being in relation to them” (p.571); it merely decrees that the pursuit of these ends will be deliberative.

The passions stand in exactly the same relation to the ends as the will does. The only difference is that they decree the (already determined) ends will be pursued through non-deliberative means.

The very upsurge of human reality defines its own being by its ends. The positing of these ends is precisely the thrust of *existence* (not an essence or a property of a being) and this is identical with freedom, *my* freedom. “Thus since freedom is identical with my existence, it is the foundation of ends which I shall attempt to attain either by the will or by passionate efforts. Therefore it can not be limited to voluntary acts. Volitions, on the contrary, like passions are certain subjective attitudes by which we attempt to attain the ends posited by original freedom… the will is determined within the compass of motives and ends already posited by the for-itself in a transcendent projection of itself toward its possibles.” (pp.572-573)

On this account, emotion has the same structure as the will, i.e. it “is a type of conduct, the meaning and form of which are the object of an intention of consciousness which aims at attaining a particular end by particular means.” (p.574) Sartre even goes so far as to say that fainting is “an *intention* of losing consciousness in order to do away with the formidable world in which consciousness is engaged…” (p.574), in other words, a strategy chosen to achieve ends posited by my upsurge into being.

Voluntary behaviour employs rational conduct to achieve the ends of consciousness whereas emotion employs “magical behaviour” in pursuit of exactly the same endeavour. But what will make me choose to reveal the technical aspect of the world (the aspect of the world in which rational conduct is effective) or the magical aspect of the world (the world in which magical behaviour is effective)? “It can not be the world itself, for this in order to be manifested waits to be discovered. Therefore it is necessary that the for-itself in its project must choose being the one by whom the world is revealed as magical or rational; that is, the for-itself must as a free project of itself give to itself magical or rational existence. It is responsible for either one, for the for-itself can be only if it has chosen itself. Therefore the for-itself appears as the free foundation of its emotions as of its volitions.” (p.574)

The will and the passions are merely “modes of being” and they both “manifest freedom equally since they are [both] ways of being my own nothingness” (p.574)

Now, Sartre finds it necessary to dig a little deeper into the nature of causes and motives because we usually consider them as determining the action which follows.

Causes generally refer to reasons for an act; “that is, the ensemble of rational considerations which justify it” (p.575) and Sartre gives the definition of a *cause* as “the objective apprehension of a determined situation as this situation is revealed in the light of a certain end as being able to serve as the means for attaining this end.” (pp.575-576) On the other hand the motive is purely subjective; “It is the ensemble of the desires, emotions, and passions which urge me to accomplish a certain act.” (p.576)

As we have seen “the cause is objective; it is the state of contemporary things as it is revealed to a consciousness” (p.577) but we must remember that the state of affairs of a world can only be revealed to a for-itself in the upsurge of that for-itself. In other words, “[i]n order for these established facts to be organized into a cause for [an act] it is necessary to isolate them from the ensemble – and thereby to nihilate them – and it is necessary to transcend them toward a particular potentiality… But this potentiality can be revealed only if the situation is surpassed toward a state of things which does not yet exist – in short, towards a nothingness… Therefore the cause, far from determining the action, appears only in and through the project of an action.” (p.578)

For Sartre, motives, as subjective, fade into the action itself. He analyses this in relation to *ambition* which serves as motive for a conqueror. Can we say the ambition is the motive *for* the conquering? Not according to Sartre; “it would be useless to conceive of this original project of conquest as “incited” by a pre-existing motive which would be ambition. It is indeed true that the ambition is a motive since it is wholly subjectivity. But as it is not distinct from the project of conquering…” (p.578), indeed, the project of conquering, as one of the conqueror’s possibilities of being, precisely *is* the motive.

So motives, causes, and ends are all related: “We are dealing here with a particular case of being-in-the-world: just as it is the upsurge of the for-itself which causes there to be a world, so here it is the very being of the for-itself – in so far as this being is a pure project toward an end – which causes there to be a certain objective structure of the world, one which deserves the name of cause in the light of this end. The for-itself is therefore the consciousness of this cause. But this positional consciousness of the cause is on principle a non-thetic consciousness of itself as a project toward an end. In this sense it is a motive; that is, it experiences itself non-thetically as a project, more or less keen, more or less passionate, toward an end at the very moment at which it is constituted as a revealing consciousness of the organization of the world into causes… it follows obviously that the cause, the motive, and the end are the three indissoluble terms of the thrust of a free and living consciousness which projects itself toward its possibilities and makes itself defined by these possibilities.” (p.579)

Motive appears to psychology as a fact of consciousness capable of determining other facts of consciousness or decisions because it, as “nothing other than a non-thetic self-consciousness, slips into the past with this same consciousness and along with it ceases to be living. As soon as a consciousness is made-past, it is what I have to be in the form of the “was.” Consequently when I tum back toward my consciousness of yesterday, it preserves its intentional significance and its meaning as subjectivity, but, as we have seen, it is fixed; it is outside like a thing, since the past is in-itself. The motive becomes then that *of which* there is consciousness.” (p.579) Because of this, the subjective motive appears on the same “level” as the objective cause.

This means that since both causes and motives appear *outside* of consciousness, in order for them to have any effect they must first be *recovered*. In themselves, they have no force, no value; “It is therefore by the very thrust of the engaged consciousness that a value and a weight will be conferred on motives and on prior causes.” (p.580) And this assignation of value can only happen (1) by me alone, and (2) in relation to the project by which I assign ends to myself. “Past motives, past causes, present motives and causes, future ends, all are organized in an indissoluble unity by the very upsurge of a freedom which is beyond causes, motives, and ends.” (p.581)

One result of this is that voluntary deliberation turns out to always be a deception. “How can I evaluate causes and motives on which I myself confer their value before all deliberation and by the very choice which I make of myself?... Actually causes and motives have only the weight which my project – *i.e.,* the free production of the end and of the known act to be realized – confers upon them. When I deliberate, the chips are down.” (p.581)

Sartre now revisits the notion of voluntary and involuntary spontaneity in relation to cause and motive:

Involuntary - An unreflective consciousness (of) *causes*

 - *Motive* is a non-positional self-consciousness

Voluntary - As a reflective consciousness, grasps *causes* as the reflected-on

 - Apprehends *motives* as quasi-objects in the psyche

After all of this, Sartre writes that “freedom appears as an unanalyzable totality; causes, motives, and ends, as well as the mode of apprehending causes, motives, and ends, are organized in a unity within the compass of this freedom and must be understood in terms of it.” (p.583)

So is our freedom completely gratuitous? Is there nothing we can point to in order to explain our actions beyond a free and contingent choice?

We have seen that “freedom is actually one with the being of the For-itself; human reality is free to the exact extent that it has to be its own nothingness.” (p.583) Sartre points out three dimensions in which the for-itself has to be its own nothingness. First, “by temporalizing itself – *i.e.,* by being always at a distance from itself, which means that it can never let itself be determined by its past to perform this or that particular act; second, by rising up as consciousness of something and (of) itself – *i.e.,* by being presence to itself and not simply self… and finally, by being transcendence – *i.e.*, not something which would *first* be in order subsequently to put itself into relation with this or that end, but on the contrary, a being which is originally a project – *i.e.*, which is defined by its end.” (p.584)

Sartre continues; “An existent which as consciousness is necessarily separated from all others because they are in connection with it only to the extent that they are *for it*, an existent which decides its past in the form of a tradition in the light of its future instead of allowing it purely and simply to determine its present, an existent which makes known to itself what it is by means of *something other than it*… this is what we call a free existent.” (p.584)

So the question remains, if my act cannot be accounted for by the state of the world or in terms of my past, how can it possibly be anything except gratuitous?

Sartre chooses to explore this through the example of a hiker stopping in fatigue and refusing to go any further. Can he be reproached for stopping where he did since he was completely free to continue on or can he defend his actions by saying he was too tired to go on? Sartre immediately agrees that there is no doubt the hiker could have done otherwise (hence, his choice was free) but reframes the question in the following way: “could I have done otherwise without perceptibly modifying the organic totality of the projects which I am”? (p.585)

For Sartre, the fatigue could never *cause* my decision to stop. We have already seen that neither causes nor motives determine our decisions. Rather, “fatigue is only the way in which I exist my body. It is not at first the object of a positional consciousness, but it is the very facticity of that consciousness.” (p.585) What is revealed to my consciousness is not my fatigue, but the surrounding countryside, the sun, the road, etc.

But this doesn’t mean that I am *not* conscious of my body, rather, I have a non-positional consciousness (of) it, and what is revealed to my consciousness appears in light of this; “Objectively and in correlation with this non-thetic consciousness the roads are revealed as interminable, the slopes as *steeper*, the sun as more burning, *etc.* But I do not yet *think* of my fatigue.” (p.585)

Of course, this doesn’t last forever. Eventually I will “seek to consider my fatigue and recover it.” (p.586) But I don’t contemplate my fatigue, “rather, as we saw with respect to pain, I *suffer* my fatigue. That is, a reflective consciousness is directed upon my fatigue in order to live it and to confer on it a value and a practical relation to myself. It is only on this plane that the fatigue will appear to me as bearable or intolerable. It will never be anything in itself, but it is the reflective For-itself which rising up suffers the fatigue as intolerable.” (p.586)

So, if we assume that my companions are just as fit as I am (therefore just as fatigued as me), the question is, how is it that they suffer their fatigue differently?

It obviously doesn’t help to say I am a “sissy” because that is just a “name given to the way in which I suffer my fatigue.” (p.586)

It is here that Sartre reveals a key point. In order to understand my choice to stop where I did – that is to say, to explain why I suffer my fatigue the way I do, which is the exact same thing – “it is necessary to examine this choice itself and to see whether it is not explained within the perspective of a larger choice in which it would be integrated as a secondary structure.” (p.586) Despite being just as fatigued as me, my companion might say she *loves* this fatigue. For her, it is a way of discovering the world around her, the opportunity to experience the sweet feeling of fatigue overcome. In light of this larger project, her fatigue gets its meaning.

But even this larger project and the meaning she derives from it is still not sufficient. It already presupposes a particular relation of my companion to her body and to the things around her, a way of existing her body, a “certain type of flight before facticity…” (p.587) There are as many ways of existing ones body as there are for-itselfs but there are certain “original structures [that] are invariable and in each For-itself constitute human reality.” (p.587)

“This original project of recovery is therefore a certain choice which the For-itself makes of itself in the presence of the problem of being. Its project remains a nihilation, but this nihilation turns back upon the in-itself which it nihilates and expresses by a particular valorization of facticity.” (p.587)

One example of this original project manifests in the behaviour patterns that we call *abandon*, whereby we completely give in to “a profound acceptance of facticity; the project of “making oneself body”…” (p.588)

It is at this point that Sartre asserts we have reached the initial project which is *selbstandig* (independent), “the original relation which the for-itself chooses with its facticity and with the world. But this original relation is nothing other than the for-itself’s being-in-the-world inasmuch as this being-in-the-world is a choice – that is, we have reached the original type of nihilation by which the for-itself has to be its own nothingness.” (p.589)

Essentially, Sartre is saying that starting from an action, we can undertake a regressive analysis which will take us back to the for-itself’s original project, which will be the for-itself’s free upsurge as being-in-the-world. Such a regression, in general terms, might look something like this: the way I *suffer* my situation -> the way I *exist* my body -> an original project for recovering the in-itself and the world.

The task here is to discern the meanings behind each act and “proceed from there to richer and more profound meanings until we encounter the meaning which does not imply any other meaning and which refers only to itself” (p.589), in effect asserting the “principle that every action, no matter how trivial, is not the simple effect of the prior psychic state… but rather is integrated as a secondary structure in global structures and finally in the totality which I am.” (p.591) Sartre praises Freud as having attempted to do just this; “For Freud as for us an act can not be limited to itself; it refers immediately to more profound structures.” (p.590) The problem with Freud, of course, is that he looks for meaning in the history of the subject, in effect ignoring the future. In addition, the structures of the subject are not elucidated with reference to him or her individually, that is, in light of his or her pre-ontological comprehension of his or her acts, but with reference to an objective witness (the psychotherapist).

In essence, Sartre recommends applying Freud’s techniques in reverse, looking not forward from the past to comprehend the present phenomenon, but backwards from the future. The bad sleep I had last night can “contribute to constituting my fatigue itself but not to the way in which I suffer it.” (p.591)

In the same stroke, Sartre denies Adler’s interpretation of the fatigue as the “expression of an inferiority complex… in the sense that this complex would be a prior formation.” (p.591) The behaviour I exhibit, struggling against my fatigue, can certainly express an inferiority complex but only in the sense that “the inferiority complex itself is a project of my own for-itself in the world in the presence of the Other… This inferiority which I struggle against and which nevertheless I recognize, this I *have chosen* from the start… to be exact it is nothing other than the organized totality of my failure behaviour, as a projected plan… Thus it is necessary to understand my reactions of inferiority and my failure behaviour in terms of the free outline of my inferiority as a choice of myself in the world.” (pp.591-592)

Sartre thinks that every act is “comprehensible as a project of itself toward a possible” (p.592) in two ways; first, as an immediately apprehensible *in order to* which allows us to “apprehend the possible which it projects and the end at which it aims” and second, as a possible which “refers to other possibles, these to still others, and so on to the ultimate possibility which I am.” (p.592) This gives us two dimensions in which to comprehend an act; the former as a “regressive psychoanalysis” that takes us back from the act to my ultimate possible (what Sartre earlier called the “original project” of the for-itself) and the latter as a “synthetic progression” which comes forward from the ultimate possible (“original project”) to the considered act and grasps it as it is integrated in the total form.

Sartre’s “ultimate possibility” is not just one possible among others, it is “the unitary synthesis of all our actual possibles… Thus the first phenomenon of being in the world is the original relation between the totality of the in-itself or world and my own totality detotalized; I choose myself as a whole in the world which is a whole. Just as I come *from* the world *to* a particular “this,” so I come from myself as a detotalized totality to the outline of one of my particular possibilities since I can apprehend a particular “this” on the ground of the world only on the occasion of a particular project of myself.” (pp.593-594)

This is the key point for Sartre in this section; the idea that “just as I can apprehend a particular “this” only on the ground of the world by surpassing it toward this or that possibility, so I can project myself beyond the “this” toward this or that possibility only on the ground of my ultimate and total possibility… [the two are] strictly correlative notions.” (p.594)

Sartre also rejects the Freudian idea of an unconscious again here. Every action we take gets its meaning from the fundamental choice we make of ourselves in the world and it is this that is our fundamental act of freedom, and not different at all from our being. So why does it feel like I didn’t make this fundamental choice?

Sartre says, “the question here is not of a deliberate choice. This is not because the choice is *less* conscious or *less* explicit than a deliberation but rather because it is the foundation of all deliberation and because as we have seen, a deliberation requires an interpretation in terms of an original choice.” (p.594) The illusion lies in the way it seems like we stand outside our motives and causes and make decisions based on them. Instead, “as soon as there are cause and motive (that is, an appreciation of things and of the structures of the world) there is already a positing of ends and consequently a choice. But this does not mean the profound choice is thereby unconscious. It is simply one with the consciousness which we have of ourselves. This consciousness, as we know, can be only non-positional; it is we-as-consciousness since it is not distinct from our being. And as our being is precisely our original choice, the consciousness (of) the choice is identical with the self-consciousness which we have… Choice and consciousness are one and the same thing.” (pp.594-595)

In this sense then, we are always fully conscious of ourselves but this consciousness is non-positional, precisely because we *are* this consciousness. A detailed analysis of ourselves cannot uncover who we are because we can never get ‘behind’ ourselves; the only way we can apprehend ourselves is by living.

In the course of engaging with the world (living), it is revealed to us positionally in a particular way, “the value of things, their instrumental role, their proximity and real distance… outline my image – that is, my choice.” (p.596) Because the world can only be revealed through an internal negation which is a projection toward the possibles I have chosen within my original choice, they necessarily outline that choice.

In response to the objection that we should be conscious of choosing ourselves, Sartre says that this “consciousness is expressed by the twofold “feeling” of anguish and of responsibility. Anguish, abandonment, responsibility, whether muted or full strength, constitute the *quality* of our consciousness in so far as this is pure and simple freedom.” (p.597)

Sartre returns to the question he posed at the outset of this section. I have yielded to fatigue and I could have done otherwise but at what price? We can now answer this. “I can refuse to stop only by a radical conversion of my being-in-the-world; that is, by an abrupt metamorphosis of my initial project – *i.e.,* by another choice of myself and my ends. Moreover this modification is always possible.” (p.598)

The fact that we feel anguish when we contemplate our choices reveals the permanent possibility of modifying this initial project of ourselves; i.e. our being; “we apprehend our choice – *i.e.,* ourselves – *as unjustifiable*. This means thatwe apprehend our choice as not deriving from any prior reality but rather as being about to serve as foundation for the ensemble of significations which constitute reality.” (p.598)

Our unjustifiability is not just a recognition of our contingency but also a recognition that we are totally responsible for “recovering” this contingency in the light of our original choice and we can change this at any moment. In living our lives we “project the future by our very being… [and] make known to ourselves what we are by means of the future” which, however, always remains possible so that we can never grasp it (ourselves) as real.

This perpetual freedom to choose and our perpetual consciousness of this freedom mean that we are “perpetually *threatened* by the nihilation of our actual choice and perpetually threatened with choosing ourselves”. (p.598) This choice is threatening because it shows us as we really are, that is, thoroughly contingent, without reason, unjustifiable, *de trop*.

Sartre also points out that this original choice does not produce itself from one moment to the next; rather, since “it is consciousness which temporalizes itself, we must conceive of the original choice as unfolding time and being one with the unity of the three ekstases. To choose ourselves is to nihilate ourselves; that is, to cause a future to come to make known to us what we are by conferring a meaning on our past… Thus freedom, choice, nihilation, temporalization are all one and the same thing.” (p.599)

Next Sartre wonders about the instant. There is no instant when we are engaged in the world; “there is only a perpetual pursued-pursuit of myself toward the ends which define me…” (p.599) but he maintains that we “are perpetually *threatened by the instant*” (p.599) in the sense that we can always cause it to appear. So what is it?

In the process of temporalisation, the instant must be included in a concrete project but it cannot be the initial or final term of this process since both are fully a part of the process. The initial term is the process’ beginning and therefore limited by a ‘prior’ nothingness. The final term is the process’ end and also limited by a nothingness ‘afterwards’. It is at this point, the beginning of a concrete project which is also the end of another concrete project, that Sartre locates the instant. “The instant will be then both a beginning *and* an end… A beginning which is given as the end of a prior project – such must be the instant. It will exist therefore only if we are a beginning and an end to ourselves within the unity of a single act.” (p.600)

This is exactly what we find in the case where we change our fundamental project; “By the free choice of this modification, in fact, we temporalize a project which we are, and we make known to ourselves by a future the being which we have chosen…” (p.600) The new temporalisation derives its beginning from the future at which it is aimed, but at the same time it cannot exist without determining itself in connection with the past which it has to be; “Thus the new choice is given as a beginning in so far as it is an end and as an end in so far as it is a beginning; it is limited by a double nothingness, and as such it realizes a break in the ekstatic unity of our being. However the instant is by itself only a nothingness, for wherever we cast our view, we apprehend only a continuous temporalization which will be in accordance with the direction in which we look”. (p.601)

Sartre compares his conception of freedom with that of Leibniz, using the example of Adam choosing to eat the apple. He agrees with Leibniz in saying that it was possible for Adam not to take the apple but this amounts to saying that another Adam would have been possible.

For Leibniz, Adam is a substance and his choice was necessitated by his essence, which God chose, not Adam. For Sartre, “Adam is not defined by an essence since for human reality essence comes after existence. Adam is defined by the choice of his ends; that is, by the upsurge of an ekstatic temporalization which has nothing in common with the logical order. Thus Adam’s contingency expresses the finite choice which he has made of himself. But henceforth what makes his person known to him is the future and not the past; he chooses to learn what he is by means of ends toward which he projects himself – that is, by the totality of his tastes, his likes, his hates, etc. inasmuch as there is a thematic organization and an inherent meaning in this totality. Thus we can avoid the objection which we offered to Leibniz when we said, “To be sure, Adam chose to take the apple, but he did not choose to be Adam.” For us, indeed, the problem of freedom is placed on the level of Adam’s choice of himself – that is, on the determination of essence by existence.”(p.603)

Again, whereas Leibniz understands “another world” to mean a particular organisation of “co-possibles”, Sartre means that “the revelation of another face of the world will correspond to another being-in-the-world of Adam.” (p.603)

Finally, since Leibniz’s other Adam is organised in another possible world, it remains there for all eternity as a pre-existing *abstract* concept whereas for Sartre, “the possible is only a pure and unformed possibility of another being such that it is not *existed* as possible by a new project of Adam toward new possibilities.” (p.603) Sartre points out that his conception of freedom is not theoretical or logical or intellectual. Rather it is purely chronological, by which he means that the act must be understood “in terms of the original ends posited by the freedom of the for-itself” (p.604)

Sartre now investigates the relation between the secondary and fundamental possibles. He makes three points:

1. A single act (“derived possible”) is not referred to the “fundamental possible” by deduction. Rather, “[i]t is the connection between a totality and a partial structure. The view of the total project enables one to “understand” the particular structure considered.” (p.604) This means that other possible acts could have replaced the actual one I chose without altering the total meaning which I *am*; “the apprehension of the complex, global form which I have chosen as my ultimate possible *does not suffice* to account for the choice of one possible rather than another. There is not here an act deprived of *motives* and *causes* but rather a spontaneous invention of *motives* and *causes*, which placed within the compass of my fundamental choice thereby enriches it.” (p.605) The choice of a different possible (an “indifferent”) does not cause the instant to surge up because it still refers to the original fundamental project.
2. It can be difficult to appreciate the connection because “it is the for-itself which chooses to consider the secondary possible as indicative of the fundamental possible.” (p.606) Sartre introduces the phrase, the “observer’s coefficient of error”, to describe the case where “we use our own scales to weight the relation between the act considered and the final ends.” (p.605)
3. Finally, “the for-itself can make voluntary [that is, reflective] decisions which are opposed to the fundamental ends which it has chosen.” (p.606) It is impossible for the unreflective consciousness, since it “is a spontaneous, self-projection toward its possibilities” (p.606), to be deceived about its ends, but the reflective attitude “involves a thousand possibilities of error” (p.606) although these don’t fundamentally alter the initial project.

The example Sartre gives here is of a person with an initial project of inferiority curing her stuttering “without having ceased to feel [her]self and to will [her]self to be inferior.” (p.607)

Sartre points out here that, although the choice of our total ends is completely free, this doesn’t mean it is always enacted in joy; “We can choose ourselves as fleeing, inapprehensible, as indecisive, *etc*. We can even choose not to choose ourselves.” (p.607) If I choose myself as inferior, then this “must be lived in accordance with the *nature* which we confer on it by this choice – *i.e.*, in shame, anger, and bitterness.” (p.608)

Sartre gives the example of a person who chooses himself as an inferior artist and notes that this choice necessarily means to *wish* to be a great artist. This *wish*, or *will*, is maintained on the *voluntary* (reflective) level and is in bad faith in the sense that “it flees the recognition of the true ends chosen by the spontaneous consciousness, and it constitutes false psychic objects as *motives* in order to be able to deliberate concerning these motives and to determine itself in terms of them (the love of glory, the love of the beautiful, *etc.*).” The will is in bad faith because it ignores its nature as a fundamental choice which has freely chosen itself (as an inferior artist) and believes the lie that its *actual* choice is to be a great artist and it is just thwarted by various situations.

Having said this, the “will here is by no means opposed to the fundamental choice; quite the contrary it is understood in its ends and in its fundamental bad faith only within the perspective of a fundamental choice of inferiority. Whereas in the form of reflective consciousness the will constitutes in bad faith false psychic objects as motives, on the other hand in the capacity of a non-reflective and non-thetic self-consciousness, it is consciousness (of) being in bad faith and consequently (of) the fundamental project pursued by the for-itself. (pp.608-609)

After this brief analysis of inferiority, Sartre agrees with Adler that it takes place on two levels; a fundamental recognition of the inferiority coupled with actions that offset or hide the feeling. Sartre disagrees in that he refuses to conceive of this fundamental recognition as unconscious and he employs bad faith in place of the concepts of censor, repression and the unconscious.

Thus, one of the most misunderstood aspects of Sartre’s philosophy; “the man who suffers from *Minderwertigkeit* [inferiority] has *chosen* to be his own tormenter. He has chosen shame and suffering, which does not mean, however, that he is to experience any joy when they are most forcefully realized.” (pp.609-610)

One curious consequence of this whole discussion is that since “the upsurge of a *voluntary* decision finds its motive in the fundamental free choice of my ends, it can attack these ends in appearance only… I can be “freed” from my “inferiority complex” only by a radical modification of my project which could in no way find its causes and its motives in the prior project, not even in the suffering and shame which I experience, for the latter are designed expressly to *realize* my project of inferiority. Thus so long as I am “in” the inferiority complex, I can not even conceive of the possibility of getting out of it… Yet at each moment I apprehend this initial choice as contingent and unjustifiable; at each moment therefore I am on the site suddenly to consider it objectively and consequently to surpass it and to make-it-past by causing the liberating *instant* to arise.” (pp.611-612)

Sartre summarises this section on freedom with eight final points:

1. For human reality, being is reduced to doing. There is no *given* in human reality (e.g. temperament, character, passions, etc.) which organise our behaviours. To be ambitious is simply to act this or that way in this or that circumstance. “Thus human reality does not exist first in order to act later; but for human reality, to be is to act, and to cease to act is to cease to be.” (p.613)
2. If human reality is action, then “its determination to action is itself action.” (p.613)
3. The human act is therefore defined by an *intention*, that is, by “a surpassing of the given toward a result to be obtained.” (p.613)
4. The intentional choice of the end reveals the world and the world is, in turn, revealed according to the end chosen. “The intention is a thetic consciousness *of* the end. But it can be so only by making itself a non-thetic consciousness of its own possibility… Thus by a double but unitary upsurge the intention illuminates the world in terms of an end not yet existing and is itself defined by the choice of its possible. My end is a certain objective state of the world, my possible is a certain structure of my subjectivity; the one is revealed to the thetic consciousness, the other flows back over the non-thetic consciousness in order to characterize it.” (p.614)
5. Since the given cannot explain the intention, “the intention by a single unitary upsurge posits the end, chooses itself, and appreciates the given in terms of the end.” (p.615)
6. Because of the double nihilation of the for-itself, the freedom of human reality is completely unconditioned; “it is the being which finds *no help, no pillar of support* in what it *was*. But on the other hand, the for-itself is free and can cause there to be a world because the for-itself is *the being which has to be what it was in the light of what it will be*. Therefore the freedom of the for-itself appears as its *being*. But since this freedom is neither a given nor a property, it can be only by choosing itself.” (p.616)
7. The unconditioned choice of the for-itself is *absurd*. “This is because freedom is a *choice* of its being but not the *foundation* of its being.” (p.616) This means that human reality can choose itself as it intends but it is unable not to choose itself; even suicide is a “choice and affirmation – of being.” (p.616) “It [the choice of the for-itself] is absurd in this sense – that the choice is that by which all foundations and all reasons come into being, that by which the very notion of the absurd receives a meaning. It is absurd as being beyond all reasons.” (p.616)
8. “The free project is fundamental, for it is my being… the fundamental project which I am is a project concerning not my relations with this or that particular object in the world, but my total being-in-the-world…” (p.617)

I must choose myself constantly or else I should fall into the pure and simple existence of the in-itself. But since this is a choice, it implies other choices, and this means that I must live in the feeling of unjustifiability. Any choice I make can be nihilated at any time and made past. “Thus at the moment at which the for-itself thinks to apprehend itself and make known to itself by a projected nothingness what it *is*, it escapes itself; for it thereby posits that it can be other than it is. It will be enough for it to make explicit its unjustifiability in order to cause the *instant* to arise; that is, the appearance of a new project on the collapse of the former.” (p.618)

Sartre concludes by pointing out that the freedom requires a given because (1) freedom can be conceived only as the nihilation of a given, (2) consciousness must be consciousness *of* something, and (3) we are free to choose but we are not free to not choose, hence choice cannot be its own foundation. This given (facticity) will be further elucidated in the next section.

II. FREEDOM AND FACTICITY: THE SITUATION

The most powerful argument against freedom is our apparent impotence in the face of our situation, any number of features of which we are completely powerless to modify. Sartre offers three immediate responses to this problem. First, the coefficient of adversity in things can only arise *by us* – that is, “by the preliminary positing of an end” (p.620). Thus although “brute things… (what Heidegger calls “brute existents”) can from the start limit our freedom of action, it is our freedom itself which must first constitute the framework, the technique, and the ends in relation to which they will manifest themselves as limits.” (p.620)

Of course, there is still a “*residuum which belongs to the in-itself considered*” (p.620) and which can be supposed to limit our freedom. This leads to Sartre’s second point; it is only “thanks to this residue – that is, to the brute in-itself as such – that freedom arises as freedom.” (p.620) Freedom necessarily requires that a being be able to realise her projects. “But in order for the act to be able to allow a *realization*, the simple projection of a possible end must be distinguished *a priori* from the realization of this end.” (p.620)

Third, “the formula “to be free” does not mean “to obtain what one has wished” but rather “by oneself to determine oneself to wish” (in the broad sense of choosing). In other words success is not important to freedom.” (p.621)

Now, to argue that “the coefficient of adversity of the thing and its character as an obstacle (joined to its character as an instrument) is indispensable to the existence of a freedom… [implies] something like an ontological conditioning of freedom… a kind of ontological priority of the in-itself over the for-itself.” (pp.622-623) And this leads us back to facticity.

The for-itself is free but freedom does not mean that the for-itself is its own foundation. If this were the case, two things would follow: first, “it would be necessary that freedom should decide the *existence* of its being.” (p.623) And this would in turn mean that “freedom should decide its own being-free; that is, not only that it should be a choice of an end, but that it should be a choice of itself as freedom. This would suppose therefore that the possibility of being-free and the possibility of not-being-free exist equally before the free choice of either one of them – *i.e.*, before the free choice of freedom.” (p.623) But this would require a previous freedom which would then lead us to infinity. Freedom “as the escape from the given, from fact… is a *fact* of escape from fact. This is the facticity of freedom.” (p.623)

And second, it would be necessary that my absolute non-existence also be possible. If this were the case, “the end must in addition turn back on its existence and cause it to arise. We can see what would result from this: the for-itself would itself derive from nothingness in order to attain the end which it proposes to itself.” (p.623) Now, the problem with this is that while freedom is a nothingness, it is a nothingness of being and as such presupposes being. The nothingness (which is the for-itself) cannot therefore found itself. This fact of not being able to not exist is the for-itself’s *contingency*.

“A freedom which would produce its own existence would lose its very meaning as freedom… It determines itself by its very upsurge as a “doing.” But as we have seen *to do* supposes the nihilation of a given. One does something *with* or *to* something. Thus freedom is a lack of being in relation to a given being… Thus freedom is a lesser being which supposes being in order to elude it. It is not free not to exist or not to be free.” (pp.624-625)

Sartre even says that being, as in the “state of things” or *situation*, “*is there in order not to constrain me*. Remove the prohibition to circulate in the streets after the curfew, and what meaning can there be for me to have the freedom (which, for example, has been conferred on me by a pass) to take a walk at night?” (p.625)

In addition, since freedom *is* the escape from being, it cannot produce itself *laterally* alongside being. Freedom is incapable of “surveying” being from the “outside” because it is inextricably bound up with it in a relationship effected by the double nihilation we have already seen.

So having established that freedom is a relation to the given, Sartre now investigates this relation in more detail. “The given does not cause freedom (since it can produce only the given) nor is it the *reason* of freedom (since all “reason” comes into the world through freedom). Neither is it the *necessary condition* of freedom since we are on the level of pure contingency. Neither is it an *indispensable* matter on which freedom must exercise itself, for this would be to suppose that freedom exists ready-made as an Aristotelian form or as a Stoic Pneuma and that it looks for a matter to work in.” (pp.625-626)

The given immediately appears to freedom coloured by insufficiency and *negatite* which illuminate it in the light of an end which does not exist. “We shall use the term *situation* for the contingency of freedom in the *plenum* of being of the world inasmuch as this *datum*, which is there only *in order not to constrain* freedom, is revealed to this freedom only as *already illuminated* by the end which freedom chooses. Thus the *datum* never appears to the for-itself as a brute existent in-itself; it is discovered always *as a cause* since it is revealed only in the light of an end which illuminates it.” (pp.626-627) In fact, this effect is so strong that it is impossible to determine in each individual case of being what comes from freedom and what from the brute being of the in-itself.

Sartre uses the example of a crag which appears to me as “not scalable” in the light of a projected scaling. The meaning of the crag is given by me in my freedom but “what my freedom can not determine is whether the rock “to be scaled” will or will not lend itself to scaling. This is part of the brute being of the rock. Nevertheless the rock can show its resistance to the scaling only if the rock is integrated by freedom in a “situation” of which the general theme is scaling. For the simple traveler who passes over this road and whose free project is a pure aesthetic ordering of the landscape, the crag is not revealed either as scalable or as not-scalable; it is manifested only as beautiful or ugly.” (p.627)

Hence we have a “paradox of freedom: there is freedom only in a situation, and there is a situation only through freedom. Human-reality everywhere encounters resistance and obstacles which it has not created, but these resistances and obstacles have meaning only in and through the free choice which human-reality *is*.” (p.629)

A. My Place

This refers to the spot where I live and also the arrangement and order of the objects around me. One immediately interesting feature of place is that it is “not possible for me not to have a place; otherwise my relation to the world would be a state of survey, and the world would no longer be manifested to me in any way at all”. (p.629)

In addition, the place I am in now refers naturally to a place I occupied previously and that to a prior place, “and so on to the *pure contingency of my place*; that is, to that place of mine which no longer refers to anything else which is a part of my experience: the place which is assigned to me by my birth.” (p.630) It would be absurd to explain this last as the place which my mother occupied when I was born because that is one of *her* places, not *mine*. This fact reveals *for me* the pure contingency of my birthplace.

The antinomy of place is that although “human-reality originally receives its place in the midst of things; human-reality is that by which something we can call place comes to things. Without human-reality *there would have been* neither space nor place, and yet this human-reality by which placing comes to things comes to receive its place among things without having any say in the matter.” (p.630)

Sartre calls the latter fact, that human reality receives its place without any control over it, a “fact of pure contingency – an absurd fact” (p.631). Of the former, regarding the creative relation between the for-itself and being, that it must be effected by the double nihilation whereby: (1) “I must be able to *escape what I am and to nihiIate it* in such a way that what I am, although it is *existed*, can still be revealed as the term of a relation” (p.632), and (2) “I must be able *by an internal negation to escape the* “thises” – *in the midst of* – *the world* *which I am not and by which I make known to myself what I am*.” (p.632)

Sartre notes that my place can only take on meaning in the light of a projected end; “I could never be *simply there*… In relation to what I project doing, in relation to the world in totality and hence to my being-in-the-world, my place appears to me as an aid or a hindrance. To be in place is to be far from— or near to—; that is, place is provided with a meaning in relation to a certain not-yet-existing being which one wants to attain.” (p.633)

This returns us to our antinomy – “the facticity of my place is revealed to me only in and through the free choice which I make of my end… But conversely facticity is the only reality which freedom can discover, the only one which it can nihilate by the positing of an end, the only thing in terms of which it is meaningful to posit an end… Without facticity freedom would not exist – as a power of nihilation and of choice – and without freedom facticity would not be discovered and would have no meaning.” (pp.634-637)

B. My Past

Every freedom has a past which it cannot give to itself according to its fancy, and at the same time without which it cannot exist. “It has to be its own past, and this past is irremediable.” (p.637) And while Sartre has shown that the past cannot determine our acts “we can not take a new decision except *in terms of it*.” (p.637) It is always there haunting us at a distance, “all which I *am* I have to be in the mode of having-been.” (p.637)

Sartre again, identifies a paradox here; “I can not conceive of myself without a past… but on the other hand I am the being through whom the past comes to myself and to the world.” (p.638) The former holds because freedom, as the end which it projects, is defined by the future it has to be and since “the future is *the not-yet-existing-state of what is*, it can be conceived only within a narrow connection with what is.” (p.638) The latter is true because “[w]hat is… takes on its meaning only when it is *surpassed* toward the future.” (p.638)

In fact, “a Past which was only Past would collapse in an honorary existence in which it would have lost all connection with the present. In order for us to “have” a past, it is necessary that we maintain it in existence by our very project towards the future…” (p.639)

In short, there is both an unchangeable element in the past and an eminently variable one. “But since, on the other hand, the meaning of the past fact penetrates it through and through… it is finally impossible for me to distinguish the unchangeable brute existence from the variable meaning which it includes.” (p.639)

Now, to say the meaning of the past is variable is not to say that I can alter the meaning of my past in any way I choose, “it means that the fundamental project which I am decides absolutely the meaning which the past which I have to be can have for me and for others. I alone in fact can decide at each moment the *bearing* of the past. I do not decide it by debating it, by deliberating over it, and in each instance evaluating the importance of this or that prior event; but by projecting myself toward my ends, I preserve the past with me, and by action I *decide* its meaning.” (p.640)

“Thus like place, the past is integrated with the situation when the for-itself by its choice of the future confers on its past facticity a value, an hierarchical order, and an urgency in terms of which this facticity *motivates* the act and conduct of the for-itself.” (p.647)

C. My Environment

Sartre defines my environment as the “instrumental-things which surround me, including their particular coefficients of adversity and utility.” (p.647) Now, even though it is true that “each object in my surroundings is made known in a situation already revealed and that the sum of these objects can not by itself alone constitute a situation” (p.648) it is nevertheless true that an abrupt appearance or change in one of these objects can amount to a radical change in the situation. Doesn’t the fact that our projects can be thwarted so easily by the environment (Sartre gives the example of a flat tyre) represent a clear demonstration of our powerlessness and the limits of our freedom?

Sartre says no. Before he outlines why, he points out that any changes in my environment cannot cause me to abandon my fundamental project (because that project serves to measure their importance) nor can they “*induce* even a partial renunciation of a project” (p.649) because in nihilating the object (or its absence) I determine myself in relation to it.

The reason why the flat tyre is not a constraint of my freedom is that, on the contrary, I need it in order to be free; “if I am to be able to *do* something – anything – it is necessary that I exercise my action upon beings whose existence is in general *independent* of my existence and in particular independent of my action. My action can *reveal* this other existence to me but does not condition it. To be free is to-be-free-to-change. Freedom implies therefore the existence of an environment to be changed: obstacles to be cleared, tools to be used. Of course it is freedom which reveals them as obstacles, but by its free choice it can only interpret the *meaning* of their being. It is necessary that they be simply there, wholly brute, in order that there may be freedom. To be free is to-be-free-to-do, and it is to-be-free-in-the-world.” (p.650)

Since freedom exists in a relation with brute givens Sartre even says that every “free project in projecting itself anticipates a margin of unpredictability due to the independence of things… Thus in a certain way, we can say that human reality is surprised by nothing.” (pp.650-651) Sartre calls this a “perpetual foreseeing of the unforeseeable” and it arises because “every project of freedom is an *open project*…” (p.651) As a kind of ‘proof’ of this he points to the way we naturally seem to hold a kind of fatalistic necessity, expressed in the phrase, “This was bound to happen.”

Sartre notes two ‘prongs’ to the structure of the *situation* which are revealed in my environment. “It is by its very surpassing of the given toward its ends that freedom causes the given to exist as *this* given here… [and at the same time] it chooses itself as *this* surpassing of the given.” (p.652) Indeed, “it is our freedom which is responsible for the fact that *there are* things with all their indifference, their unpredictability, and their adversity, and for the fact that we are inevitably separated from them; for it is on the ground of nihilation that they appear and that they are revealed as bound one to another. Thus the project of my freedom adds *nothing* to things: it causes *there to be* things; that is, precisely, realities provided with a coefficient of adversity and utilizable instrumentality.” (p.653)

D. My Fellowman

This dimension of facticity includes encountering the Other but also finding myself engaged in a world where instrumental complexes can have a meaning which escapes that of my free project. Sartre identifies three “layers of reality” we need to study to understand what the fact that there are Others means for our situation: “instruments which are already meaningful (a station, a railroad sign, a work of art, a mobilization notice), the meaning which I discover as already mine (my nationality, my race, my physical appearance), and finally the Other as a center of reference to which these meanings refer.” (p.654)

Everywhere I turn in the world, I encounter meanings which I didn’t project; directions, instructions, warnings, guidelines, etc. Are these not manifest limits on my freedom? What’s more, these ‘readymade’ meanings address me in so far as I am *anybody* (the anonymous “they”) and which I realise through *any* techniques (the way I make use of things). In using these techniques, the world is in turn modified as “*the countenance which the world offers to everybody*.” (p.656) Has my freedom not escaped me on all sides in this?

In general, “my factual existence – *i.e.*, my birth and my place – involves my apprehension of the world and of myself through certain techniques. Now these techniques which I have not chosen confer on the world its meanings. It appears that it is no longer I who decide in terms of my

ends whether the world appears to me with the simple, well-marked oppositions of the “proletarian” universe or with the innumerable interwoven nuances of the “bourgeois” world. I am not only thrown face to face with the brute existent. I am thrown into a worker's world, a French world, a world of Lorraine or the South, which offers me its meanings without my having done anything to disclose them.” (p.659)

The facticity which is thereby revealed to me here is expressed “by the fact of my appearance in a world which is revealed to me only by collectively and already constituted techniques which aim at making me apprehend the world in a form whose meaning has been defined outside of me.” (p.657) The way I *exist my factual belonging* to these collectivities is the use which I make of their techniques. “Belonging to the *human race* is defined by the use of very elementary and very general techniques: to know how to walk, to know how to take hold…” (p.657)

Sartre elects to examine one of these *techniques*; speech. The first important distinction we must make concerns that of *reality* and *truth*. The concrete techniques which directly manifest our belonging to these collectivities, Sartre designates as *realities*, while the more abstract and general structures which contain meaning and essence, are *truths*. Hence the “*reality* of speech is language and [the] reality of language is dialect, slang, jargon, *etc*. And conversely the *truth* of the dialect is the language, the *truth* of the language is speech.” (p.658)

Specifically, Sartre wants to know what the primary phenomenon, the pure fact, the *reality*, of speech is. It is not the *word* because the word can only receive a meaningful function in a sentence. For the same reason, it cannot be the *sentence* either, which only “lose[s] [its] banal and conventional character if… placed within the point of view of the author who saw *the thing to be expressed*…” (p.660)

Consider the way we use language. We don’t take as our starting point words, syntax, grammar rules, etc. They don’t “pre-exist” the use which we make of them. Rather, the meaningful sentence “is a constructive act which is conceived only by a transcendence which surpasses and nihilates the given toward an end.” (p.660) Hence, to “understand the word in the light of the sentence is *very exactly* to understand any given whatsoever in terms of the situation and to understand the situation in the light of the original ends. To understand a sentence spoken by my companion is, in fact, to understand what he “means” – that is… to throw myself with him toward possibles, toward ends, and to return again to the ensemble of organized means so as to understand them by their function and their end.” (p.660)

In this case, the sentence, as the speaker’s project involving the nihilation of a given (the speech itself), can only be interpreted in terms of an end (belonging to the speaker), and rather than depending on the given or the word, it only serves to illuminate the former (given/speech) and make the latter (word) understandable. The sentence then, being connected thus to my project and the ends thereof, reveals itself as a “moment of the free choice of myself” (p.661), which brings Sartre to his conclusion; “If a language is the reality of speech, if a dialect or jargon is the reality of a language, then the reality of the dialect is the *free act* of designation by which I choose myself as *designating*.” (p.661)

The sentence can only be meaningful within a situation as interpreted by the ends of a project of a for-itself; “in order for words to enter into relations with one another, in order for them to latch on to one another or repulse one another, it is necessary that they be united in a synthesis which does not come from them. Suppress this synthetic unity and the block which is called “speech” disintegrates; each word returns to its solitude and at the same time loses its unity, being parcelled out among various incommunicable meanings. Thus it is within the free project of the sentence that the laws of speech are organized; it is by speaking that I make grammar. Freedom is the only possible foundation of the laws of language.” (pp.662-663)

Now we can see the original characteristic that marks every situation; “it is by its very surpassing of the given as such (the linguistic apparatus) that the free project of the sentence causes the given to appear as *this* given (these laws of word order and dialectal pronunciation). But the free project of the sentence is precisely a scheme to assume *this given*; it is not just any assumption but is aimed at a not yet existing end across existing means on which it confers their exact meaning as a means.” (p.664)

The exact same thing holds for the human race and the individual. The human race is the truth of the individual, but “it can not be a *given* in the individual without profound contradiction. As the laws of speech are sustained by and incarnated in the concrete free project of the sentence, so the human race (as an ensemble of peculiar techniques to define the activity of men) far from pre-existing an individual… is the ensemble of abstract relations sustained by the free individual choice. The for-itself in order to choose itself as a *person* effects the existence of an internal organization which the for-itself surpasses toward itself, and this internal technical organization is in it the national or the human.” (p.665)

Now, of course it is true that the linguistic techniques the for-itself uses it has gotten from others, but Sartre maintains here that he is not claiming the for-itself is the free foundation of its being. The for-itself is free *within a condition* and it is through the meaning of the *situation* that he is trying to understand the relation between the condition and the freedom. What he has just shown is that “the existence of meanings which do not emanate from the for-itself can not constitute an external limit of its freedom.” (p.666)

The for-itself chooses itself beyond certain meanings of which it is not the foundation; language, nationality, race, etc., but nevertheless it chooses itself in relation to *these* structures. What does this mean? “It means that the for-itself arises in a world which is a world for other for-itselfs. Such is the *given*. And thereby, as we have seen, the meaning of the world is *alien* to the for-itself. This means simply that each man finds himself in the presence of *meanings* which do not come into the world through him. He arises in a world which is given to him as *already looked-at*…” (p.666)

Naturally, Sartre does not see this as a limit of freedom, “rather it is *in this world* that the for-itself must be free...” (p.667) In addition, with regard to the Other, we have a choice as to how we will apprehend her; namely, as a subject or as an object mediated by the Other’s look.

The key here is to note that it is *to the* for-itself, as receiver of the look, that the *techniques* appear. There “*exists for the Other*, in so far as he transcends himself toward his possibles, *no technique* but a concrete *doing* which is defined in terms of his individual end… The For-itself as soon as it assumes a position with respect to the Other, causes techniques to arise in the world as *the conduct of the Other as a transcendence-transcended*.” (pp.667-668) This can also be seen in speech where the spoken sentences appear *for the listener*, not the speaker. In fact, they are immediately transcended by the speaker towards his or her ends.

Here we can see the foundation for Sartre’s claims; “Thus the For-itself is responsible for the fact that the Other's conduct is revealed in the world as techniques. The for-itself can not cause the world in which it arises to be furrowed by *this* or *that particular technique*… but it causes that which is lived by the Other as a free project to exist *outside* as technique…” (p.668)

The words and actions of the Other lose all meaning if there is no for-itself to constitute them into meaningful objects; “It causes the internal laws of the Other’s act, which were originally founded and sustained by a freedom engaged in a project, to become now objective rules of the conduct-as-object…” (p.668) This is not a restriction on the for-itself’s freedom, on the contrary, “it is *in this world*… that freedom comes into play… to be free is not to choose the historic world in which one arises – which would have no meaning – but to choose oneself in the world whatever this may be.” (p.668)

Sartre gives a good example here to demonstrate the absurdity of claiming that a certain *state* of techniques can be restrictive of human possibilities. We don’t imagine that someone born in the Middle Ages was *less* free because they were ignorant of the use of a car. This lack of knowledge can only appear as a lack to us in terms of the modern world. “The For-itself which historicizes itself in the time of Duns Scotus therefore nihilates itself in the heart of a fullness of being – that is, of a world which like ours is *everything which it can be*.” (p.669)

In the same way, Sartre has little time for those who wonder would Descartes could have done had he known about modern science. This supposes Descartes has an *a priori* nature we can uplift and deposit in the contemporary period. “But this is to forget that Descartes is what he has chosen to be, that he is an absolute choice of himself from the standpoint of a world of various kinds of knowledge and of techniques which this choice both assumes and illuminates. Descartes is an absolute upsurge at an absolute date and is perfectly unthinkable at another date, for he has made his date by making himself.” (p.669)

So, the for-itself appropriates *techniques* that it causes to be revealed in the Other-as-object and *utilises* them. Two consequences follow: “(1) By employing a technique, the For-itself surpasses the technique toward its own end; it is always beyond the technique which it employs. (2) The technique which was originally a pure, meaningful conduct fixed in some Other-as-object, now, because it is interiorized, loses its character as a technique and is integrated purely and simply in the free surpassing of the given toward ends; it is recovered and sustained by the freedom which founds it exactly as dialect or speech is sustained by the free project of the sentence.” (p.670)

But someone may still claim that the Other brings a limit to my freedom because in the upsurge of the Other I *am* certain things without having chosen them. I am handsome, ugly, Jewish, etc., all “*for the Other* with no hope of apprehending this meaning which I have *outside* and, still more important, with no hope of changing it.” (p.671)

In this case, I cannot escape this restriction by conferring meaning on a brute existent or accepting responsibility for the meaning Others have conferred on objects. Since I cannot grasp this meaning, I cannot take responsibility for it; for me it is an “empty indication.” (p.671) Hence, something of myself “exists in the manner of the *given*; at least *for me*, since this being which I am *is suffered*, it *is* without *being existed*… Thus here I suddenly encounter the total alienation of my person: I am something which I have not chosen to be.” (pp.671-672)

Sartre acknowledges that being-for-Others raises two real limits on my freedom: the first in terms of my situation (the alienating process of the Other making an object of my situation), the second in terms of my being (the Other making an object of my being-for-itself). These limits are “posited by the Other's pure and simple existence – that is, by the fact that my transcendence exists for a transcendence.” (p.673)

Nevertheless, Sartre points out that it is still true that freedom can only be limited by freedom. In this case, “when we include the Other's existence in our considerations, that my freedom on this new level finds its limits also in the existence of the Other's freedom. Thus on whatever level we place ourselves, the only limits which a freedom can encounter are found in freedom.” (p.673)

And, more importantly this alienation of my situation and my being never occur in *my* situation or *my* being; I never encounter it. It exists *in* the situation but never *for me*. Sartre describes it thus: “It is therefore ultimately not a head-on obstacle which freedom encounters but a sort of centrifugal force in the very nature of freedom, a weakness in the basic “stuff” of freedom which causes everything which it undertakes to have always one face which freedom will not have chosen, which escapes it and which for the Other will be pure existence.” (pp.673-674)

In addition, this alienation can happen only as I apprehend the Other as subject, something which I do through my own freedom. Sartre talks about this with regard to being Jewish; “It is only by my recognizing the *freedom* of anti-Semites… and by my assuming this *being-a-Jew* that I am a Jew for them; it is only thus that being-a-Jew will appear as the external objective limit of the situation. If, on the contrary, it pleases me to consider the anti-Semites as pure *objects*, then my being-a-Jew disappears immediately to give place to the simple consciousness (of) being a free, unqualifiable transcendence… Thus the Other's freedom confers limits on my situation, but I can *experience* these limits only if I recover this being-for-others which I am and if I give to it a meaning in the light of the ends which I have chosen.” (pp.674-675)

Sartre now asks how exactly do I experience these objective limits of my being: Jew, beautiful, ugly, etc.? It cannot be through apprehending these traits in the Other or in my non-thetic consciousness (of) projecting myself toward this or that possibility. In fact, since they are *outside* for us, Sartre calls them *unrealisables*.

However, for them to appear as unrealisable, they must be “revealed in the light of some project aiming at realizing them… Correlatively therefore with this assuming project, the unrealizables are revealed as *to be realized*.” (p.677) In other words, while they *are* for the Other, they can only be for me *if I choose them*; “I do not choose to be for the Other what I am, but I can try to be for myself what I am for the Other, by choosing myself such as I appear to the Other…” (p.677)

“Thus the unrealizables are revealed to the for-itself as “unrealizables-to-be-realized.” They do not thereby lose their character as *limits*; quite the contrary, it is as objective and external limits that they are presented to the for-itself as *to be interiorized*.” (pp.677-678) Since the unrealisable is revealed in this manner, Sartre calls it an *imperative*, and notes that, as an order ‘from’ the Other, it retains its character as *exteriority* through the attempt of the for-itself to reassume it with his or her freedom and make of it a structure of his or her free projects; in other words, *interiorise* it.

Sartre concludes this section thus: “But these external limits of freedom, precisely because they are external and are interiorized only as unrealizables, will never be either a *real* obstacle for freedom or a limit suffered. Freedom is total and infinite, which does not mean that it has no limits but that it *never encounters them*. The only limits which freedom bumps up against at each moment are those which it imposes on itself and of which we have spoken in connection with the past, with the environment, and with techniques.” (p.680)

E. My Death

Sartre first outlines the two ways death has been conceived. In the realist tradition, death was a door opening onto either a nothingness or a non-human existence. In either case, “death escaped man at the same time that it rounded him off with the non-human absolute.” (p.681)

The idealists attempted to *recover* death by considering it as “the final term *belonging to the series*… death as the end of life is interiorized and humanized.” (p.681) Under this conception death is like the resolved chord in a melody; the final chord that ends the series but which is nothing more than the series and is present in the whole series as the point it builds to.

In addition to this, death becomes individualised. It is *mine*; “Hence I become responsible for *my* death as for my life. Not for the empirical and contingent phenomenon of my decease but for this character of finitude which causes my life like my death to be *my* life.” (p.682) Since death is thus interiorised it can be recovered by our freedom. Sartre will question this characterisation of death.

Sartre begins by asserting that death is fundamentally absurd and in this sense can never be likened to a resolved chord at the end of a melody. He points out the mistake in the idea that we are like condemned people who don’t know the date of our execution. Rather we are like condemned people, preparing ourselves to make a good showing on the scaffold, when we suddenly catch the flu and die.

The ‘death-as-a-resolved-chord’ idea hopes to recover death “by metamorphosing it into an *expected death*. If the meaning of our life becomes the expectation of death, then when death occurs, it can only put its seal upon life.” (p.683) This is basically Heidegger’s *resolution*.

Sartre says we can expect a *particular* death, but not death itself. Heidegger’s “sleight of hand” uses the individuality of Dasein to personalise death as the “only thing which nobody can do for me” while at the same time using this personalised death to individualise Dasein authentically “by projecting itself freely toward its final possibility…” (p.683) Sartre concedes that if death is *my* death then I can indeed await it, but that is precisely what he is now throwing into question.

To say that death is the “only thing which nobody can do for me” is empty because it “considers death as the ultimate subjective possibility, the event which concerns only the for-itself… But then it follows that none of my possibilities… can be projected by anyone other than me.” (pp.683-684) Nobody can do anything for me, so does everything I do now become “like death, irreplaceable and unique”? (p.684) On the other hand, if my acts are considered by their function, efficacy, and result then anyone can die for me, to inspire, to bear witness, for the country, etc.

“In short there is no personalizing virtue which is peculiar to *my* death. Quite the contrary, it becomes *my* death only if I place myself already in the perspective of subjectivity; it is my subjectivity defined by the pre-reflective *cogito* which makes of my death a subjective irreplaceable, and not death which would give an irreplaceable selfness to my for-itself. In this case death can not be characterized; *for it is death* as *my* death, and consequently its essential structure as death is not sufficient to make of it that personalized and qualified event which one can *wait* for.” (pp.684-685)

Sartre goes on to say that, in any case, death cannot be waited for, since “we can “wait for” only a determined event which equally determined processes are in the act of realizing.” (p.685) Rather, death is “nothing but the revelation of the absurdity of every expectation” (p.685) since every expectation will be voided by death.

Not only that but there is a very slim chance that our death will happen upon us in the manner of a resolved chord, harmoniously bringing the melody of life to an end. On the contrary, there is every chance that we will die before we accomplish our task or indeed, outlive the accomplishment of our task. And even, if by some remarkable fortuity, death does indeed come upon someone in the manner of a resolved chord, it can only do so by chance, which “removes from it any character as a harmonious end. An end of a melody in order to confer its meaning on the melody must emanate from the melody itself.” (p.687) Such a death will *resemble* a resolved chord but will not *be* one. “Thus this perpetual appearance of chance at the heart of my projects can not be apprehended as *my* possibility but, on the contrary, as the nihilation of all my possibilities, a nihilation which *itself is no longer a part of my possibilities*. Thus death is not *my* possibility of no longer realizing a presence in the world but rather *an always possible nihilation of my possibles which is outside my possibilities*.” (p.687)

Sartre also derives the same conclusion from considering meanings. “Human reality is meaningful, as we know. This means that human reality makes known to itself what it is by means of that which is not, or if you prefer, that it is *to come* to itself.” (p.687) In the first place, this waiting is for the realisation of our ends but ultimately it consists in waiting for *ourselves*, for the “final term which on principle is never given and which is the value of our being – that is, evidently, a plenitude of the type “in-itself-for-itself.” By means of this final term the recovery of our past would be made once and for all.” (p.688)

Sartre refers to Christians who have seen in death this final term, the closing of the account “which makes one finally *be* what one *has been* – irremediably.” (p.689) The problem with seeing death as the stroke which gives our life its meaning and value is that we do not choose the moment of our death; “it is of little importance that all the acts of which the web of our life is made have been free; the very meaning of them escapes us if we do not ourselves choose the moment at which the account will be closed… If death is not the free determination of our being, it can not *complete* our life.” (p.689)

What’s more, since “death does not appear on the foundation of our freedom, it can only *remove all meaning from life*.” (p.689) This gives to our waiting, our lives, the character of absurdity. “Thus death is never that which gives life its meanings; it is, on the contrary, that which on principle removes all meaning from life. If we must die, then our life has no meaning because its problems receive no solution and because the very meaning of the problems remains undetermined.” (p.690)

We cannot rescue this situation with resort to suicide. Since suicide is an act of my life, like all acts, “it itself requires a meaning which only the future can give to it; but as it is the *last* act of my life, it is denied this future… Suicide is an absurdity which causes my life to be submerged in the absurd.” (pp.690-691)

“[S]ince the for-itself is the being which always lays claim to an “after,” there is no place for death in the being which is for-itself. What then could be the meaning of a waiting for death if it is not the waiting for an undetermined event which would reduce all waiting to the absurd… A waiting for death would be self-destructive, for it would be the negation of all waiting. My project toward a particular death is comprehensible (suicide, martyrdom, heroism) but not the project toward *my* death as the undetermined possibility of no longer realizing a presence in the world, for this project would be the destruction of all projects. Thus death can not be my peculiar possibility; it can not even be one of *my* possibilities.” (p.691)

Finally, death is the “triumph of the point of view of the Other over the point of view *which I am* toward myself.” (p.691)

“So long as the for-itself is “in life” it surpasses its past toward its future, and the past is that which the for-itself has to be.” (p.691) After death, my past is not abolished, “it is engulfed in the in-itself. My whole life *is*.” (p.692) And as such, it can only derive meaning from the Other who becomes guardian over the dead life; there is no counter-balance in the form of the living consciousness whose life it is and who can recover his or her meanings in a project of the self toward specific ends.

Sartre notes that even being completely forgotten is one possible attitude the Other may take toward the dead life. “To be forgotten is, in fact, to be resolutely apprehended forever as one element dissolved into a mass (the “great feudal lords of the thirteenth century,” the “bourgeois Whigs” of the eighteenth, the “Soviet officials,” *etc.*); it is in no way to be *annihilated*, but it is to lose one's personal existence in order to be constituted with others in a collective existence… we choose our own attitude toward the dead, but it is not possible for us not to choose an attitude. Indifference with respect to the dead is a perfectly possible attitude… Thus by its very facticity, the for-itself is thrown into full “responsibility” with respect to the dead; it is obliged to decide freely the fate of the dead.” (pp.693-694)

This allows us to see the fundamental difference between life and death: “life decides its own meaning because it is always in suspense” (p.694) whereas the dead life, while it doesn’t cease changing, “it is *all done*. This means that for it the chips are down and that it will henceforth undergo its changes without being in any way responsible for them.” (p.695)

Until my death, I decide the meaning of my acts but after death, the meaning of my acts is decided by the Other. This prompts Sartre to say that “death represents a total *dispossession*; it is the Other who *dispossesses* [the dead for-itself] of the very meaning of his efforts and therefore of his being…” (p.695) And again, “the very existence of *death* alienates us wholly in our own life to the advantage of the Other. To be dead is to be a prey for the living. This means therefore that the one who tries to grasp the meaning of his future death must discover himself as the future prey of others.” (p.695)

In light of this, death cannot therefore belong to the ontological structure of the for-itself. It refers completely to the Other, that is “to a fact, fundamental to be sure, but totally contingent as we have seen, a fact which is the Other’s existence.” (p.697) Therefore “to contemplate my life by considering it in terms of death would be to contemplate my subjectivity by adopting with regard to it the Other's point of view. We have seen that this is not possible.” (p.697) Death belongs to my facticity, not one of my possibilities. “I can neither discover my death nor wait for it nor adopt an attitude toward it, for it is that which is revealed as undiscoverable, that which disarms all waiting, that which slips into all attitudes (and particularly into those which are assumed with respect to death) so as to transform them into externalized and fixed conducts whose meaning is forever entrusted to others and not to ourselves. Death is a pure fact as is birth; it comes to us from outside and it transforms us into the outside. At bottom it is in no way distinguished from birth, and it is the identity of birth and death that we call facticity.” (pp.697-698)

Is death then the limit of our freedom? Does this end the possibility of us freely giving to our being a meaning for which we are responsible?

Not quite. First, Sartre wants to distinguish between death and finitude; “death is a contingent fact which belongs to facticity; finitude is an ontological structure of the for-itself which determines freedom and exists only in and through the free project of the end which makes my being known to me. In other words human reality would remain finite even if it were immortal, because it *makes* itself finite by choosing itself as human. To be finite, in fact, is to choose oneself – that is, to make known to oneself what one is by projecting oneself toward one possible to the exclusion of others. The very act of freedom is therefore the assumption and creation of finitude… Death occurs “within time,” and human-reality by revealing to itself its unique finitude does not thereby discover its mortality… There is no place for death in being-for-itself…” (pp.698-699)

So what is death? “Nothing but a certain aspect of facticity and of being-for-others – *i.e.*, nothing other than the *given*. It is absurd that we are born; it is absurd that we die. On the other hand, this absurdity is presented as the permanent alienation of my being-possibility which is no longer *my* possibility but that of the Other.” (p.699)

We have already encountered this description in the preceding section (“my fellowman”) when we talked about *unrealisables*. Death is “an exteriority which remains exteriority even in and through the attempt of the for-itself to realize it. It is what we defined above as the *unrealizable to be realized*… It is not *my* possible in the sense that it would be my own end which would make known to me my being. But due to the fact that it is an unavoidable necessity of existing elsewhere as an outside and an in-itself, it is interiorized as “ultimate;” that is, as a thematic meaning of the hierarchical possibles, a meaning out of reach.” (p.700)

Sartre concludes this section with six points to summarise the “being-in-situation” of the for-itself in so far as it is responsible for its manner without being the foundation of its being:

1. It is only through the double negation (of myself and the in-itself) effected from the point of view of a freely posited end that does *not-yet-exist*, that the world can appear to me. This is the *situation*.
2. The situation only exists in correlation with the surpassing of the given toward an end. It is impossible to consider a situation from the outside; it must be *existed*.

The situation is not subjective; it is the things themselves and myself among things. My upsurge adds nothing. The situation is also not objective in the sense of standing alone independent of the for-itself.

The situation can be neither subjective nor objective because it is not *knowledge*; rather it is a *relation of being* between the for-itself and the in-itself and this relation encompasses everything.

1. The for-itself is nothing other than its situation. Being-in-situation defines human reality, accounting for both its *being-there* and for its ­*being-beyond*.

There is no situation in which the *given* could crush the freedom of the for-itself which constitutes it as such – and there is no situation in which the for-itself would be more free than others. (The situation of the slave cannot be compared with that of the master in the same way that the situation of a person in the Middle Ages cannot meaningfully be compared with the modern day.) Each person realises only one situation – *their own*.

1. The situation is presented as eminently concrete.
2. The situation is neither “the free result of a freedom nor… the ensemble of the constraints to which I am subject; it stems from the illumination of the constraint by freedom which gives to it its meaning as constraint… Thus freedom enchains itself in the world as a free project toward ends.” (pp.704-705)
3. Since the for-itself is a temporalisation, it *is* not but rather “makes itself”. The situation accounts for the permanence we see in other people and experience in ourselves. The realities illuminated by my free project (which is not permanent but must be perpetually renewed) present a permanent image of us and it is this we tend to identify with. In truth these qualities are all *unrealisables*.

A person’s character, “which is nothing but his free project in so far as it is-for-the-Other, appears also for the For-itself as an invariable unrealizable… The Character often is what the For-itself tries to recover in order to become the In-itself-for-itself which it projects being.” (pp.705-706)

Finally, changes in the situation are always anticipated and can never *provoke* a change of my project.

III. FREEDOM AND RESPONSIBILITY

Given the fact that man is condemned to be free “he is responsible for the world and for himself as a way of being.” (p.707) “Responsibility” here means “consciousness (of) being the incontestable author of an event or of an object.” (p.707) The for-itself is responsible for the world because “he is the one by whom it happens that *there is* a world.” (p.707)

“He must assume the situation with the proud consciousness of being the author of it, for the very worst disadvantages or the worst threats which can endanger my person have meaning only in and through my project; and it is on the ground of the engagement which I am that they appear. It is therefore senseless to think of complaining since nothing foreign has decided what we feel, what we live, or what we are.” (pp.707-708) The situation is not just *mine*, I *am* my situation and to reject it, which is on principle impossible, would be to reject the free consciousness that one is.

Sartre takes a fairly hard line here in maintaining that there are no accidents in life and everything which happens to me, I deserve. He talks specifically about being mobilised for war. I deserve the war, first because I could get out of it by suicide or desertion if I wanted. No matter the costs (cowardice, loss of face, *etc.*), my decisions are always mine and they are always a free choice; “If therefore I have preferred war to death or to dishonour, everything takes place as if I bore the entire responsibility for this war.” (pp.708-709)

Secondly, “the war is *mine* because by the sole fact that it arises in a situation which I cause to be… I can no longer distinguish at present the choice which I make of myself from the choice which I make of the war. To live this war is to choose myself through it and to choose it through my choice of myself.” (p.709)

Finally, “each person is an absolute upsurge at an absolute date and is perfectly unthinkable at another date… I have chosen myself as one of the possible meanings of the epoch which imperceptibly led to war. I am not distinct from this epoch [situation]… Thus I *am* this war…” (p.709)

The for-itself is completely responsible for everything except for its very responsibility, because it is not the foundation of its being. It is completely *abandoned* in the world, not as a helpless victim, but as a being “engaged in a world for which I bear the whole responsibility without being able, whatever I do, to tear myself away from this responsibility for an instant.” (p.710)

“But I didn’t ask to be born.” This objection carries no weight with Sartre. My birth is a part of my facticity and, as such, “will appear only in so far as I surpass it toward my ends. Thus facticity is everywhere but inapprehensible; I never encounter anything except my responsibility.” (p.710) I cannot ask why I was born or curse my birth simply because these “attitudes toward my birth – *i.e.*, toward the *fact* that I realize a presence in the world – are absolutely nothing else but ways of assuming this birth in full responsibility and of making it *mine*.” In short, I can never get outside of myself, my situation, to comment on it.

All of the above is why the “for-itself apprehends itself in anguish; that is, as a being which is neither the foundation of its own being nor of the Other's being nor of the in-itselfs which form the world, but a being which is compelled to decide the meaning of being – within it and everywhere outside of it. The one who realizes in anguish his condition as *being* thrown into a responsibility which extends to his very abandonment has no longer either remorse or regret or excuse; he is no longer anything but a freedom which perfectly reveals itself and whose being resides in this very revelation. But as we pointed out at the beginning of this work, most of the time we flee anguish in bad faith.” (p.711)

**Chapter Two – Doing and Having**

I. EXISTENTIAL PSYCHOANALYSIS

Existential psychoanalysis is essentially the attempt to uncover the end which the individual’s free project thrusts itself toward.

Sartre starts out by identifying two errors traditional psychology has fallen into: first, it views desire as being *in* the individual or somehow something the individual ‘contains’ within him or herself. In doing this, it falls victim to the illusion of substance, treating the individual as a ‘thing’ when we have seen that consciousness is precisely nihilation; that is, *no*-thing. Rather, we need to be mindful of the fact that desires are not *in* consciousness; “they are consciousness itself in its original projective, transcendent structure, for consciousness is on principle consciousness *of* something.” (pp.712-713)

Secondly, psychology considers its job complete once it has reached the “concrete ensemble of empirical desires.” (p.713) Because of her ambition, she developed an exuberance which she channelled into writing. Sartre’s problem with this as a psychological explanation is that it hasn’t actually explained anything. *Why* did her ambition lead to exuberance and not gloominess, for instance? *Why* did she turn to writing rather than some other activity? “In a word, we have understood nothing; we have seen a succession of accidental happenings, of desire springing forth fully armed, one from the other, with no possibility for us to grasp their genesis. The *transitions*, the becomings, the transformations, have been carefully veiled from us, and we have been limited to putting order into the succession by invoking empirically established but literally unintelligible sequences…” (p.714)

Traditional psychology “is too quickly satisfied when it throws light on the general structures of delusions and does not seek to comprehend the individual, concrete content” (p.715) behind a person’s actions. It may identify a delusional psychosis but fails to ask why does this individual believe that he is *this* particular historical personality rather than some other?

Ultimately psychology treats its explanations as inexplicable, original givens and Sartre is unwilling to grant to them this irreducible status. Psychology refers a person’s behaviours, feelings and tastes back to properties which describe the human like we might describe chemical processes in inert matter. But such chemical processes are not meaningful, they don’t transcend themselves to make known to themselves what they are. For example, psychological analysis uncovers that a person is ambitious and stops there, yet Sartre claims that one does not “receive” ones ambition; “It is meaningful; therefore it is free. Neither heredity, nor bourgeois background nor education can account for it…” (p.716)

Sartre wants more than this and bases his demand on a “pre-ontological comprehension of human reality and on the related refusal to consider man as capable of being analyzed and reduced to original givens, to determined desires (or “drives”), supported by the subject as properties by an object.” (p.717)

If we accept that desires are fundamental givens beyond which we cannot go, the individual is either a “substratum unqualified by these desires; that is, a sort of indeterminate clay which would have to receive them passively or he would be reduced to the simple bundle of these irreducible drives or tendencies. In either case the *man* disappears; we can no longer find “the one” to *whom* this or that experience has *happened*; either in looking for the *person*, we encounter a useless, contradictory metaphysical substance – or else the being whom we seek vanishes in a dust of phenomena bound together by external connections.” (p.717)

Sartre talks about his friend who likes rowing. Modern psychologists tend to stop their investigations here and explain his liking rowing either as a pure given or as due to the fact that he is a sportsman who likes violent exercise. In other words, “the psychological explanation when it does not suddenly decide to stop, is sometimes the mere putting into relief relations of pure concomitance or of constant succession, and it is at other times a simple classification.” (p.718)

Sartre has problems with both of these. The idea of classification in particular, has no value at all and what’s more, it “amounts to assuming the priority of the abstract over the concrete – as if the fondness for play existed first in general to be subsequently made specific by the action of these circumstances in the love of sport, the latter in the fondness for rowing, and finally the rowing in the desire to row on a particular stream…” (p.718)

He also asks, “how are we to believe that a desire to row is *only* a desire to row?” (p.719) An activity which would be absurd if reduced to itself could only make sense if “there was a meaning which transcended it; that is, an indication which referred to the reality of man in general and to his condition.” (p.719) As a result of this, Sartre is seeking to reduce every action to the “fundamental relation of the for-itself to the world and to itself (selfness) through a particular [situation]; [the situation] represents only a conducting body which is placed in the circuit.” (p.719) Love is, therefore, not the desire of *this* woman but rather aims at “laying hold of the world in its entirety through the woman.” (p.719)

Granting that the person is a totality, Sartre says that “we can not hope to reconstruct him by an addition or, by an organization of the diverse tendencies which we have empirically discovered in him. On the contrary, in each inclination, in each tendency the person expresses himself completely, although from a different angle…” (p.720) and this means that we can “discover in each tendency, in each attitude of the subject, a meaning which transcends it” (p.720) and then “by a comparison of the various empirical drives of a subject… try to discover and disengage the fundamental project which is common to them all…” (p.721)

So, we are looking for the fundamental project which defines the human being. Sartre rejects Heidegger’s project of authenticity since it is based on “the attitude of the subject toward his own death. Now if death causes anguish, and if consequently we can either flee the anguish or throw ourselves resolutely into it, it is a truism to say that this is because we wish to hold on to life. Consequently anguish before death and resolute decision or flight into unauthenticity can not be considered as fundamental projects of our being. On the contrary, they can be understood only on the foundation of an original project of *living*; that is, on an original choice of our being.” (p.721) It is this original choice we are interested in.

The for-itself, as a *lack of being*, ultimately desires *to be*. Sartre makes clear here that “the desire to be by no means exists *first* in order to cause itself to be expressed subsequently by desires *a posteriori*. There is nothing outside of the symbolic expressions which it finds in concrete desires.” (p.722)

We already know what the object of this desire to be is, what the for-itself lacks; the in-itself. However, it does not merely desire the “pure and simple return to the in-itself… what the for-itself demands of the in-itself is precisely the totality detotalized – “In-itself nihilated in for-itself.” In other words the for-itself projects *being as for-itself*, a being which is what it is… It is as consciousness that it wishes to have the impermeability and infinite density of the in-itself…. the in-itself-for-itself; that is, the ideal of a consciousness which would be the foundation of its own being-in-itself by the pure consciousness which it would have of itself. It is this ideal which can be called God. Thus the best way to conceive of the fundamental project of human reality is to say that man is the being whose project is to be God.” (pp.723-724)

So what of freedom? This sounds a lot like a human “nature” or “essence”. Sartre answers by saying that “while the *meaning* of the desire is ultimately the project of being God, the desire is never *constituted* by this meaning; on the contrary, it always represents a particular discovery of its ends.” (p.724) Basically, our freedom comes from the fact that we choose *how* we will carry out this fundamental project of becoming God, the “mode of being”, which will express itself in the myriad concrete desires which make up our conscious life.

Sartre identifies at least three “stories” going on here. *Empirical desire* symbolises a deeper *fundamental concrete desire* (“which is the person himself and which represents the mode in which he has decided that being would be in question in his being” (p.724)) which expresses the “abstract meaningful structure which is the desire of being in general…” (p.724) In this sense then the desire of being in general is the *truth* of the concrete fundamental desire.

It is at this point that Sartre gives a definition of existential psychoanalysis. It is the specific method which will allow us to *decipher* the behaviour patterns, drives and inclinations of an individual. The following make up the details of this method:

The principle: “[M]an is a totality and not a collection. Consequently he expresses himself as a whole in even his most insignificant and his most superficial behaviour.” (p.726)

The goal: “[T]o *decipher* the empirical behaviour patterns of man…” (p.726)

The point of departure: Experience

The pillar of support: “[T]he fundamental, pre-ontological comprehension which man has of the human person.” (p.726)

The method: Comparative; “only the comparison of these acts of conduct can effect the emergence of the unique revelation which they all express in a different way.” (p.727)

Next, Sartre lists the ways existential psychoanalysis agrees with psychoanalysis proper:

1. Both “consider all objectively discernible manifestations of “psychic life” as symbols maintaining symbolic relations to the fundamental, total structures which constitute the individual person.” (p.727)
2. Both reject any primary givens; hereditary, character, etc.
3. Both question the human as a being-in-the-world; that is, taking into account the whole of his or her *situation*.
4. Both “search within an existing situation for a fundamental attitude which can not be expressed by simple, logical definitions because it is prior to all logic, and which requires reconstruction according to the laws of specific syntheses.” (p.728) For empirical psychoanalysis this is the *complex*; for existential psychoanalysis, the *original choice*.
5. Both “refuse to admit that the subject is in a privileged position to proceed in these inquiries concerning himself. They equally insist on a strictly objective method, using as documentary evidence the data of reflection as well as the testimony of others.” (p.728) Empirical psychoanalysis uses the unconscious for this while existential psychoanalysis holds that there is a distinction between something (the fundamental project) being conscious and being known. Reflection, as quasi-knowledge, grasps only the concrete behaviour, “it does not follow that it commands the instruments and techniques necessary to isolate the choice symbolized, to fix it by concepts and to being it forth into the full light of day… [This means that] projects revealed by existential psychoanalysis, will be apprehended *from the point of view of the Other*.” (p.729)

And the ways in which it differs:

1. Empirical psychoanalysis has already decided on its irreducible in advance and looks to interpret its findings in terms of this. The irreducible for existential psychoanalysis, on the other hand, because it is a choice, will reveal itself as the original contingency.

Moreover, this choice will always be *particular*, not an abstract, general term (e.g. libido) which would then have to be differentiated and made concrete first in complexes and then in detailed acts of conduct.

1. Since existential psychoanalysis proceeds on a *choice* it removes any suspicion that the environment acts “mechanically” on the subject. “The environment can act on the subject only to the exact extent that he comprehends it; that is, transforms it into a situation.” (p.731)

In the same stroke, this also eliminates the possibility of deriving any general interpretation of the symbols confronted, the “universal symbolism” Freudianism is famous for.

In addition, as a choice, it can be *revoked* at any *instant* by the subject. The analyst will therefore have to be aware that symbols could change meaning at any moment, that is, be “completely flexible and adapt… to the slightest observable changes in the subject... The method which has served for one subject will not necessarily be suitable to use for another subject or for the same subject at a later period.” (p.732)

1. Existential psychoanalysis rejects the unconscious and is searching for a “free, conscious determination – which is not even resident in consciousness, but which is one with this consciousness itself.” (p.732)

II. “DOING” AND “HAVING” POSSESSION

Ontology will supply the structures behaviour patterns and desires conform to, not because there are abstract desires common to everybody, but because each desire (to eat, to sleep, to create, etc.) expresses all of human reality and will therefore be structurally similar.

So, what does ontology teach about desire?

Desire is a lack of being which means it is supported by the being of which it is a lack, i.e. the in-itself-for-itself. So, “the being of human reality is originally not a substance but a lived relation”, (p.735) the limiting terms of which are the in-itself-for-itself and the original in-itself. The first of these terms is ideal and beyond all contingency and existence. The second of these is a brute, concrete existent and the concrete object of desire (a slice of bread, a car, a partner, etc.). Hence, “by its very structure desire expresses a man’s relation to one or several objects in the world.” (p.735) This relation manifests in one of three possible ways; to *possess* this object, to *do* that thing or to *be* someone.

Sartre begins with the relation *to do* and notes that it is not irreducible. “One does (=makes) an object in order to enter into a certain relation with it. This new relation can be immediately reducible to *having*.” (p.736)

If I make a picture, it is so I can stand in relation to it via the bond of creation, as the owner. For Sartre, for something to be *mine*, I must stand in a double relation to it; first, as the consciousness which conceives it (through a “continuous creation” whereby it must exist “*through me*”) and second, as the consciousness which encounters it (as not *me*).

*Knowing* is also a form of appropriation (i.e. having) where the truth discovered is *my* knowledge. All discovery is possession and Sartre calls this the *Actaeon complex* in honour of the Greek myth in which Actaeon moves the branches aside to get a better view of Diana bathing.

Knowing participates in the same relation as *creation* but it also appears in the opposite sense; i.e. “consciousness attracts the object to itself and incorporates it in itself. Knowledge is assimilation… The known is transformed into *me*; it becomes my thought and thereby consents to receive its existence from me alone. But… the known remains in the same place, indefinitely absorbed, devoured, and yet indefinitely intact, wholly digested and yet wholly outside…” (p.739) This symbol represents the dream of non-destructive assimilation, desire sated without the loss of the thing desired. Sartre calls this the *Jonah complex*, in honour of that Old Testament gent who was plausibly swallowed by a whale.

One more form of *doing*, namely, the activity of *playing*, Sartre admits seems entirely gratuitous. *Play* is the opposite of the spirit of seriousness which characterises other activities. “The serious attitude involves starting from the world and attributing more reality to the world than to oneself… The serious man is “of the world” and has no resource in himself. He does not even imagine any longer the possibility of *getting out of* the world, for he has given to himself the type of existence of the rock, the consistency, the inertia, the opacity of being-in-the-midst-of-the-world.” (p.741)

Play, on the other hand, is “an activity of which man is the first origin, for which man himself sets the rules, and which has no consequences except according to the rules posited… As a result, there is in a sense “little reality” in the world. It might appear then that when a man is playing, bent on discovering himself as free in his very action, he certainly could not be concerned with *possessing* a being in the world.” (p.741)

However despite this, play is not irreducible either; it can be reduced to a desire to *be*; “to make manifest and to present to *itself* the absolute freedom which is the very being of the person.” (p.742)

Sartre then goes on to say that play is seldom completely free from possession anyway. When I ski, he points out that my activity “enable[s] me to *possess* this field of snow. At present, *I am doing something to it*. That means that by my very activity as a skier, I am changing the matter and meaning of the snow.” (p.743) Secondly, play typically includes a sense of appropriation through a difficulty overcome. In this case, “the snow is identical with *the Other*… [and the relation established between me and it is] the relation of master to slave.” (p.747)

Sartre summarises our progress thus far. ”Thus ontology teaches us that desire is originally a desire *of being* and that it is characterized as the free lack of being. But it teaches us also that desire is a relation with a concrete existent in the midst of the world and that this existent is conceived as a type of in-itself; it teaches us that the relation of the for-itself to this desired in-itself is appropriation. We are, then, in the presence of a double determination of desire: on the one hand, desire is determined as a desire to be a certain being, which is the *in-itseIf-for-itseIf* and whose existence is ideal; on the other hand, desire is determined in the vast majority of cases as a relation with a contingent and concrete in-itself which it has the project of appropriating.” (pp.747-748)

Now, Sartre wants to make clear the relation between the concrete in-itself (the object of desire) and the in-itself-for-itself (the ideal of desire) and the relation between appropriation (of a concrete in-itself) and being (as a type of relation to the in-itself-for-itself).

Considering the situation from the point of view of the object possessed, Sartre notes that “the quality of *being possessed* does not indicate a purely external denomination marking the object’s external relation to me; on the contrary, this quality affects its very depths; it appears to me and it appears to others as making a part of the object’s being.” (p.749) Sartre sees this as being the significance behind the reason people used to be buried with their possessions and even the custom of widows jumping on the funeral pyre after their husbands pass.

Sartre continues… “to be possessed means *to be for someone*. This means that the possessed object is touched *in its being..*. [hence] the bond of possession is an internal bond of *being*.” (p.750) This bond must be apprehended on the basis of the fact that ownership “derives its origin from the insufficiency of being in the for-itself.” (p.751)

We must now turn to the nature and meaning of the *dyad* which the two, possessor and the possessed, form. “To possess is to be united with the object possessed in the form of appropriation; to wish to possess is to wish to be united to an object in this relation. Thus the desire of a particular object is not the simple desire *of* this object; it is the desire to be united with the object in an internal relation, in the mode of constituting with it the unity “possessor-possessed.” The desire *to have* is at bottom reducible to the desire to be related to a certain object in a certain *relation of being*.” (p.751)

All possession, for Sartre, means that the thing exists *for me*, has been made *for me*. And moreover, possession always refers back to an original act of creation whereby I make for myself the object in my possession. Division of labour can disguise this relation but not erase it completely. As a side note, Sartre talks of *luxury* as being a degraded form of creation and possession; “in the primitive form of luxury, I possess an object which I *have had made* (*done*) for myself by people belonging to *me*…” (p.752)

“To have is first to create… [And] the original, radical relation of creation is a relation of emanation… What I create is still me – if by creating we mean to bring matter and form to existence.” (p.753) If what I create is me then this means that I *am* what I *have*. I am the mountain which I climb in the sense that I conquer it, give it meaning, and make it exist as *being there*; I am the view I have from the summit, for it exists only through me.

The problem with creation is that it is an “evanescent concept which can exist only through its movement. If we stop it, it disappears.” (p.754) Hence, the idea of continuous creation; we continually ‘create’ what we possess (that is, what *is* me) by our very being-in-the-world but at the same time the possessed object is always there, in-itself. Here is the double relation we call *mine*.

Now, since I (as for-itself/consciousness/nothingness) am always outside myself and incomplete, when I enter into the relation of possession with an in-itself, I “transfer myself to the object possessed.” (p.755) And, in this relation, the in-itself is the dominant term. I am “nothing save a nothingness which possesses, nothing other than pure and simple possession… In possession, I am my own foundation in so far as I exist in an in-itself. In so far as possession is a continuous creation, I apprehend the possessed object as founded by me in its being. On the other hand, in so far as creation is emanation, this object is reabsorbed in me, it is only myself. Finally, in so far as it is originally in itself, it is not-me, it is myself facing myself, objective, in itself, permanent, impenetrable, existing in relation to me in the relation of exteriority, of indifference. Thus I am the foundation for myself in so far as I exist as an indifferent in-itself in relation to myself. But this is precisely the project of the in-itself-for-itself.” (p.755)

Appropriation is therefore “the *symbol* of the ideal of the for-itself or value.” (p.755) In addition, through possession, I make of myself an object-being identical to my being-for-others, hence “the Other can not surprise me; the being which he wishes to bring into the world, which is myself-for-the-Other – this being I already enjoy possessing. Thus possession is in addition a *defense against others*.” (p.755)

Of course, we must remember that this desire of being my own foundation can never be realised through possession (or any other means for the matter); it is only *symbolic* and *ideal.* Sartre considers that it is for this reason (true ‘possession’ being impossible) that we often see the urge to *destroy* accompany the urge to possess. Destruction is also a reabsorption into myself in the same way that creation is; it is even more ‘possessive’ than creation because the object is no longer there to show its impenetrability and independence; “to destroy is to recreate by assuming oneself as solely responsible for the being of what existed *for all*.” (p.757)

In many ways, using something is also an act of destruction; *to use it up*. Generosity is another form of destruction manifested in the gift. “I destroy the object by giving it away as well as by annihilating it; I suppress in it the quality of being *mine*, which constituted it to the depths of its being…” (p.758) In short, generosity also means to appropriate by destruction.

As Sartre pointed out earlier, the subject may not know any of this precisely because “to possess means *to be in this relation* or better yet to be this *relation*.” (p.759) When we step back to contemplate this relation, it disappears; “An instant earlier I was engaged in an ideal totality, and precisely because I was engaged in my being, I could not know it; an instant later the totality has been broken and I can not discover the meaning of it in the disconnected fragments which formerly composed it…” (p.759) In other words, since the circuit of selfness is non-thetic, *to be conscious (of)* does not mean *to know*.

As we have seen, each possessed object manifests the entire world so to “appropriate this object is then to appropriate the world symbolically.” (p.760) In general, “to possess is to wish to possess the world across a particular object. And as possession is defined as the effort to apprehend ourselves as the foundation of a being in so far as it is ourselves ideally, every possessive project aims at constituting the For-itself as the foundation of the world or a concrete totality of the in-itself, and this totality is, as totality, the for-itself itself existing in the mode of the in-itself. To-be-in-the-world is to form the project of possessing the world; that is, to apprehend the total world as that which is lacking to the for-itself in order that it may become in-itself-for-itself.” (p.762)

Finally, Sartre feels we can define the relations which unite the categories *to be* and *to have*:

While the desire *to be* bears directly on the for-itself and has the project of conferring on it without intermediary the dignity of in-itself-for-itself, the desire *to have* aims at the for-itself on, in and through the world. It is by the appropriation of the world that the project *to have* aims at realizing the same value as the desire *to be*… Fundamentally we have to do with two ways of looking toward a single goal…

Every for-itself is a free choice; each of its acts – the most insignificant as well as the most weighty – expresses this choice and emanates from it. This is what we have called our freedom. We have now grasped the *meaning* of this choice; it is a choice of being, either directly or by the appropriation of the world, or rather by both at once. Thus my freedom is a choice of being God and all my acts, all my projects translate this choice and reflect it in a thousand and one ways, for there is an infinity of ways of being and of ways of having. The goal of existential psychoanalysis is to rediscover through these empirical, concrete projects the original way in which each man has chosen his being.

III. QUALITY AS A REVELATION OF BEING

Sartre now considers why a person chooses to “possess the world through *this* particular object rather than another” (p.764) and asserts that the choice of this object is not irreducible, as is commonly thought (“So and so likes chocolate and there’s no reason or explanation for this”). Nor is it, if we think of food, “on the level of a taste for sweetness or for bitterness and the like that the free choice is irreducible… [rather, it is] on the level of the choice of the *aspect of being which is revealed* through and by means of sweetness, bitterness, and the rest.” (p.764 – italics added) The idea here is that our likes/dislikes are not arbitrary. However the explanation for our choice of them cannot be found in the things themselves. Rather, we need to look to the *qualities* of those things we choose to possess (desire) because that choice aims, “through [their] mode of being or quality”, at their *being*. In other words, the *being* of the thing (which explains why we (choose to) desire it) is revealed through its qualities, so by looking at the former we can deduce the latter and understand/explain the desire.

This idea needs to be explicated in a little more detail. We have seen that human reality is at bottom a *choice of being*, either directly or through the appropriation of the world. In the case of the latter, each *thing* is chosen “depending on the mode in which it renders being” (p.768); that is, the way it appears to us. In existential psychoanalysis therefore, it will be important to analyse *things* and establish “the way in which each thing is the *objective* symbol of being and of the relation of human reality to this being.” (p.768)

The quality of a thing is the *being* of the ‘thing’ and not just a subjective apprehension of it. In addition, the whole ‘thing’ extends throughout all of its qualities and each quality is spread out over all of the others. This is what Sartre has called “this”. These qualities are apprehended by the for-itself as symbols of a being which escapes us; the in-itself.

Sartre is concerned here with revealing what the quality of the “this” *means* in terms of the fundamental project of the human being. He calls this establishing the “metaphysical purport” (p.770) of the quality under consideration. An understanding of this will allow us to also understand why a person likes oranges but hates eggs.

As an example, Sartre takes the quality of sliminess. Many things can be “slimy”, a handshake, a smile, a feeling, etc. Common opinion holds that we first have certain experiences we dislike and, separate to these, sensory intuitions of the “slimy”. Afterwards, we create a connection between the two. Sartre finds this explanation unlikely. Although it seems perfectly natural to us, *after the fact*, that this or that feeling is “slimy”, there is no reason why we should link two unrelated phenomena; the physical sensation and the psychic quality. On the contrary, Sartre suggests the two must already share a symbolic relation in some way; “it is impossible to derive the value of the psychic symbolism of “slimy” from the brute quality of the *this* and equally impossible to project the meaning of the *this* in terms of a *knowledge* of psychic attitudes.” (p.772)

In terms of the original project regarding the slimy, which we know to be appropriation, the slimy is revealed as *to be possessed*, which means “I form the project of being the foundation of its being, inasmuch as it is myself ideally.” (p.772) Possession is ultimately being, so from the very start, the slimy is apprehended as *myself*. In other words, immediately, it is revealed with a psychic connection.

Sartre now embarks on a discussion of the mode of being (qualities) symbolised by the slimy. Briefly, it lacks the fluidity of water but does not yet have the consistency of a solid. It is *soft* to the touch and appears, unlike water, as *able to be possessed* but when I attempt to grasp it, it reverses this situation and instead appears to possess me. I try to let it go and it clings to me, sucking at me. The symbol Sartre gets from this is of a “poisonous possession”, the possibility that the in-itself might absorb the for-itself and draw the latter into the indifferent exteriority and foundationless existence of the former.

Having already established an objective structure of the slimy that is, from the outset, formed with a psychic intuition, “each time that an object will manifest to me this relation of being, whether it is a matter of a handshake, of a smile, or of a thought, it will be apprehended by definition as slimy…” (p.779)

Sartre also examines the phenomenon of holes and the fascination children seem to have with them. This has been interpreted in Freudian terms to be indicative of “infant sexuality” or the equally fantastic idea of “birth trauma”. Sartre gives a short analysis of holes, revealing them to be presented as a nothingness *to be filled*. The child therefore, cannot restrain from inserting his or her finger into the hole, filling it, completing it, preserving the totality of the in-itself. This is the explanation for why children suck their thumbs.

This gives us a general understanding of the projects of human reality but ultimately existential psychoanalysis wants to reveal the free project of the unique person. It is using this general understanding of the “thises” that we can then go on to do just this. “I can love slimy contacts, have a horror of holes, *etc*. That does not mean that for me the slimy, the greasy, a hole, *etc*. have lost their general ontological meaning, but on the contrary that *because* of this meaning, I determine myself in this or that manner in relation to them. If the slimy is indeed the symbol of a being in which the for-itself is swallowed up by the in-itself, what kind of a person am I if in encountering others, I love the slimy? To what fundamental project of myself am I referred if I want to explain this love of an ambiguous, sucking in-itself? In this way *tastes* do not remain irreducible givens; if one knows how to question them, they reveal to us the fundamental projects of the person.” (pp.782-783)

All tastes, preferences, likes, dislikes, etc. can be accounted for if we understand the existential significance of the qualities that are the “thises” we *choose* to appropriate as our way of being-in-the-world. “Ontology abandons us here; it has merely enabled us to determine the ultimate ends of human reality, its fundamental possibilities, and the value which haunts it. Each human reality is at the same time a direct project to metamorphose its own For-itself into an In-itself-For-itself and a project of the appropriation of the world as a totality of being-in-itself, in the form of a fundamental quality.” (p.784)

Every human reality is this passion to escape its contingency and found itself as God. It is in this context that Sartre is able to pronounce that “Man is a useless passion.” (p.784)

**Conclusion**

I. IN-ITSELF AND FOR-ITSELF: METAPHYSICAL IMPLICATIONS

In this section, Sartre wants to address the problem of dualism that some might suspect his philosophy of endorsing. Specifically, there are two problems he wishes to resolve. The first is the matter of what bond there can be linking the for-itself and the in-itself. The second is how we can conceive of Being (as a general category belonging to all existents) after we have broken it up into two fragments.

In answer to the first Sartre says, “the For-itself and the In-itself are reunited by a synthetic connection which is nothing other than the For-itself itself. The For-itself, in fact, is nothing but the pure nihilation of the In-itself; it is like a hole of being at the heart of Being… The for-itself has no reality save that of being the nihilation of being… The For-itself is not nothingness in general but a particular privation of *this being*. Therefore we have no business asking about the way in which the for-itself can be united with the in-itself since the for-itself is in no way an autonomous substance.” (p.785-786)

In this way, the being of the for-itself is relative to the in-itself but because it has to *make itself be* (or else it would become a given in-itself) it is also absolute. This lets Sartre call the for-itself an “absolute *Unselbstandig* [dependent]”. (p.787)

At this point, Sartre raises a metaphysical question (“metaphysical” meaning the “study of individual processes which have given birth to *this* world as a concrete and particular totality” (p.788)) – why does the for-itself arise in terms of being?

Before looking at this, he mentions two additional questions; what is the origin of being and why is it that *there is* being?

The first is a true metaphysical question although Sartre deems it to be “devoid of meaning: all the “Whys” in fact are subsequent to being and presuppose it. Being is without reason, without cause, and without necessity…” (p.788)

The second question is actually an ontological question, not a metaphysical one, and much of *Being and Nothingness* directly addressed it. Sartre answers, *there is* being only because of the for-itself. The phenomenon comes to being through the for-itself.

So, back to original metaphysical question asked; why does the for-itself arise in terms of being? This is not meaningless; since the for-itself is fundamentally an interrogation, it has the “right” to ask it. However, ontology cannot supply the answer because it refers to an event, not a structure of being.

Ontology can help metaphysics through giving two pieces of information: First, it reveals that “every process of a foundation of the self is a rupture in the identity-of-being of the in-itself, a withdrawal by being in relation to itself and the appearance of presence to self or consciousness.” (p.788) It is therefore the first stage in a “progression toward the immanence of causality – *i.e.*, toward being a self-cause.” (p.788)

Secondly, it tells us that “the for-itself is *effectively* a perpetual project of founding itself qua being and a perpetual failure of this project.” (p.789)

So, we know that “*If* the in-itself were to found itself, it could attempt to do so only by making itself consciousness… [and] [c]onsciousness is *in fact* a project of founding itself; that is, of attaining to the dignity of the in-itself-for-itself or in-itself-as-self-cause.” (p.789)

This is all ontology can tell us. From here, it encounters a contradiction since “it is through the for-itself that the possibility of a foundation comes to the world. In order to be a project of founding itself, the in-itself would of necessity have to be originally a presence to itself – *i.e.*, it would have to be already consciousness.” (p.789) All ontology can conclude is that “*everything takes place as if* the in-itself in a project to found itself gave itself the modification of the for-itself.” (p.790) From here only metaphysics can conceive of the actual process by which this happens.

Finally, how are we to understand Being in general in light of the division of for-itself and in-itself? Well, we have just shown that the two modalities of being are not actually juxtaposed. In fact, we can consider them articulated in such a way as to constitute a totality. Nevertheless, Sartre asks, which shall we call *real*? The totality in-itself/for-itself or the pure in-itself.

To answer this we must know what a totality requires. Sartre considers that to be a totality “it is necessary that the diversity of its structures be held within a unitary synthesis in such a way that each of them considered apart is only an abstraction. And certainly consciousness considered apart is only an abstraction; but the in-itself has no need of the for-itself in order to be; the “passion” of the for-itself only causes *there to be* in-itself. The *phenomenon* of in-itself is an abstraction without consciousness but its *being* is not an abstraction.” (p.791)

The only way we can consider this in-itself/for-itself a totality is if the in-itself is also bound to the for-itself and that can only happen in the ideal case where being founds itself as the in-itself-for-itself. The problem is that this is impossible and even includes a contradiction, as we saw earlier.

It is not meaningless to raise the question of this totality but it is a question whose answer lies outside of ontology. From an ontological perspective “it makes no difference whether we consider the for-itself articulated in the in-itself as a well-marked *duality* or as a disintegrated being [a totality albeit disintegrated]”. (p.794) Only metaphysics can carry the discussion from here. Do we treat the *real* as a totality “provided with two dimensions of being, the dimension in-itself and the dimension for-itself (from this point of view there would be *only one* phenomenon: the world)” or should we “preserve the ancient [Cartesian] duality “consciousness-being””? (p.794)

II. ETHICAL IMPLICATIONS

Obviously ontology cannot give us ethical precepts, it does “however, allow us to catch a glimpse of what sort of ethics will assume its responsibilities when confronted with a *human reality in situation*.” (p.795) “Ontology has revealed to us, in fact, the origin and the nature of *value*; we have seen that value is the *lack* in relation to which the for-itself determines its being as *a lack*.” (p.795) Value therefore arises naturally along with the existence of the for-itself. Since the various projects of consciousness all aim at securing the lacked in the form of value or self-cause, existential psychoanalysis (as the investigation of how these tasks are related to value) is “*moral description*, for it releases to us the ethical meaning of various human projects.” (p.796)

In light of this, Sartre tells us that existential psychoanalysis must “make us repudiate the *spirit of seriousness*. The spirit of seriousness has two characteristics: it considers values as transcendent givens independent of human subjectivity, and it transfers the quality of “desirable” from the ontological structure of things to their simple material constitution.” (p.796)

The serious attitude therefore conceals from the for-itself the symbolic values of things (as its way of being-in-the-world and fulfilling its original project of becoming in-itself-for-itself) and “puts forward the opacity of the desired object and posits it in itself as a desirable irreducible.” (p.796) This is clearly moral (having to do with value) but also bad faith (in that the for-itself is avoiding anguish by hiding from itself the free project which it is).

In one of the most interesting paragraphs in the whole book, Sartre says:

Many men, in fact, know that the goal of their pursuit is being; and to the extent that they possess this knowledge, they refrain from appropriating things for their own sake and try to realize the symbolic appropriation of their being-in-itself. But to the extent that this attempt still shares in the spirit of seriousness and that these men can still believe that their mission of effecting the existence of the in-itself-for-itself is written in things, they are condemned to despair; for they discover at the same time that all human activities are equivalent (for they all tend to sacrifice man in order that the self-cause may arise) and that all are on principle doomed to failure. Thus it amounts to the same thing whether one gets drunk alone or is a leader of nations. If one of these activities takes precedence over the other, this will not be because of its real goal but because of the degree of consciousness which it possesses of its ideal goal…

Ultimately however, ontology reveals “to the moral agent that he is *the being by whom values exist*. It is then that his freedom will become conscious of itself and will reveal itself in anguish as the unique source of value and the nothingness by which the *world* exists.” (p.797) When this happens, the quest for being appears as nothing more than one possible among any number of other possibles. Sartre then fires off a barrage of unanswered questions regarding what the consequences of this revelation might be for the for-itself.

The final point Sartre closes on is another thorny issue. All throughout *Being and Nothingness*, the for-itself has been described as both freedom *and* a flight from itself; the being which is what it is not and is not what it is. Ultimately, “freedom chooses then not to *recover* itself but to flee itself, not to coincide with itself but to be always at a distance *from* itself.” (p.798) Another flurry of questions follow. What does this mean? Is it bad faith or another fundamental attitude? Can we *live* this new aspect of being?

Sartre closes this section and the book with the (ultimately unfulfilled) promise of investigating these questions in a future ethical work.

1. This is another Husserlian term which refers to the object-pole of a perception. Its opposite is *noesis*, which is the intentional direction of consciousness directed outwards (towards the *noema*). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Sartre uses the word *non-thetic* to mean not explicitly directed towards or focused on. *Thetic* means the opposite, i.e. the explicit focus of consciousness on an object. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. This is a phenomenological term which means the object comprises a synthetic totality comprised of an infinite number of aspects and is therefore unable to be apprehended at once. The opposite is *immanent* which means given at once. Consciousness can only fully apprehend objects immanent in nature. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. The same can be said of negation. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. ‘Analytic’ is a Kantian term which simply means the predicate of a proposition is already contained in the subject, i.e. it tells us nothing we didn’t already know. The classic example in philosophy is “All bachelors are unmarried”. The predicate, ‘married’, doesn’t contribute to our knowledge because bachelors, by definition, are unmarried. The opposite is ‘synthetic’. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. This concept of ‘nihilating nothingness’ struck me as odd when I first read it but it seems to mean ‘affecting nothingness’ or ‘arousing nothingness’. We say ‘creating X’ where X is some *thing*, but since nothingness is precisely *nothing*, the appropriate verb (in contrast to ‘create’) is ‘nihilate’. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. A Heideggerian, not a Sartrean, expression [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. ‘Facticity’ for Sartre means the (reasonably fixed) ‘facts’ of a situation, treated as inert things-in-themselves which we (as consciousnesses) stand in relation to. ‘Transcendence’ refers to our ability to separate ourselves from (transcend) these things and determine ourselves in relation to them. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Cox, G. (2006). *Sartre: A Guide for the Perplexed*. London: Continuum. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. This is Sartre’s own word which means subject to sudden changes or transitions. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Whenever the ‘(of)’ is represented in brackets, as in the phrase “consciousness (of)…”, this serves to show that Sartre is talking about a his pre-reflective (and non-positional) self-consciousness, that is, a consciousness aware of itself but not by explicitly positing itself as an object for itself. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. This points to a crucial tenet of Sartre’s philosophy; being in-itself is prior to being-for-itself and the latter emerges from the former, although, as we have seen, the ‘emergence’ lies with the for-itself, not the in-itself. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. In his book, *The Transcendence of the Ego*. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. I take this to refer to the “adumbrations” of Husserl. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. “Quiddity” is a thing’s essence, the “what” of a thing. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Gerundives refers to the properties of instruments which reveal themselves in light of the possibilities which I am, e.g. the pencil as “to write with”. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)